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A Sigma Tau Delta Publication

Literary Review 2001



15th Edition

Spring 2001

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**Literary Review
2001**

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This publication emerges at an interesting juncture of debate at Whittier College. The Publication Board, which for many years had funded this publication and other forms of campus media, is under evaluation, with suggestions made towards its dissolution. As such, I would like to dedicate this fifteenth edition of the Literary Review to members of Boards past and present who have dedicated their energy to maintain creative freedom of expression and allow the myriad of Whittier College voices to be heard with verve and vigour. Publications such as this allow students of the liberal arts to engage in discourse of many different forms, be it poetry, fiction, art or academic writing, and recognizes their many talents. It also allows the entire Whittier College community to share in these talents and celebrate the fact that such discourse informs, entertains, challenges and humbles us in our efforts to be *liberal beings*, in the truest sense of the term.

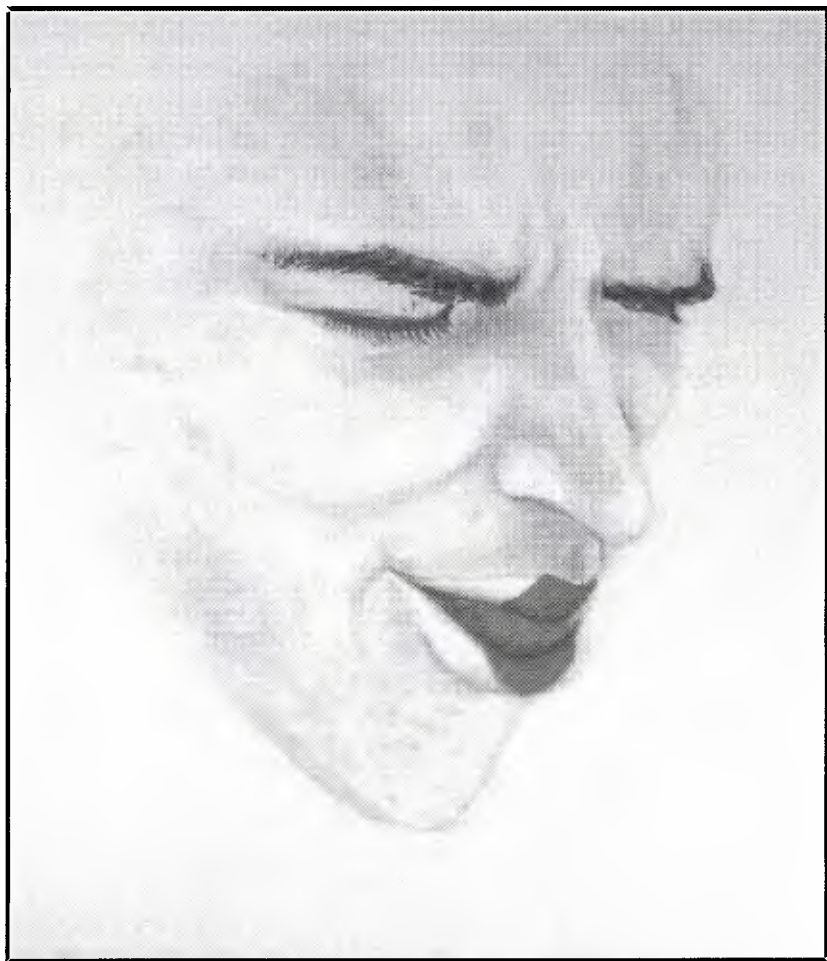
Happy Reading!

Allison Outschoorn
Editor-in-Chief '01

Assistant Editor: Ryan Fong

Executive Advisor: Dr. Anne Kiley

Staff: Members of Sigma Tau Delta



Geisha No. 4, 2000 by Jo Fan Huang

Poetry & Playwriting

James Adomian

How the Grinch Stole the Power

Originally published in the Quaker Campus

The school year had come to the end of semester
When stress, strain and strife had started to fester.
And every young wit down in Whittier College
Was busy with work, increasing their knowledge.
They thinked up their thoughts by the pound and the inch,
Reading on every chair, bed and bench—
Everyone, that is, except for the Grinch.
Oh, the Grinch hated papers, late nights, education,
Computers, gadgets and indoor illumination.
He hated the frenzied collegiate pace,
He hated the intelligent look on their face,
And he LOATHED their music with wall-shaking bass!
He could hear them now, Kate, Carl and Cletus,
Tapping and typing a ten-hundred page treatise.
Sitting in columns, writing in rows,
Sipping espresso and nibbling No-Doze.
They were hopped up on coffee, riddled on ritalin,
They stayed up all night marking margins and scribbling.
Sneering with Grinchy contempt, like a dog with rabies
“Enough,” he cried, “with those trust-fund babies!”
His plan was delicious, his motive pernicious
The Grinch smiled a smile that was vulgar and vicious.
Retention would drop, morale would sour,
If only the lights could be drained of their power.
The Grinch said to himself,
“They study at night,
And everyone knows you can’t write without light!
They’ll fail their papers, their tests and exams
And teachers will curse with impotent damns!”
All that he needed was the silent permission

Of the California Public Utility Commission.
He waited till night, and just the right hour
When work was most urgent—he shut off the power!
He turned off the music, the e-mail and lamps,
The clocks and the printers all ran out of amps.
No cramming, no typing, no words upon papers,
No juicers to juice the electric-light-makers!
And now all the wits in Whittier College,
Sit in the dark without power or knowledge.

Charlene Beal

From a Reading

Blessed are they, for theirs is
The kingdom of the skies; for
They shall be pitied; for they
Will inherit. How dark it is.
Ask and it will be given to you.
Is this Santa Claus? This must
Be some mistake with miles before
I sleep. I'm hoping it is so;
That the animals sing on
Christmas eve, that oxen will
Kneel, living fleshed full. I
Want to learn to be still, time
Flying through me, freeing my
Mind of thought. Solitary as an
Oyster. Even if you say- Think
Of this, even if you kiss, even
Then I will not give a breathless
Pause. God is the breath inside.

Tirzah Champ

Envelope Me

Seal it tight.
Lick the corners
So that it'll stick.
Secure the creases
So that our hearts
Remain in the center
Right where the triangle peaks.
Spray fragrances of you
On the inside and out.

Love me like I love me,
That has never been done.
Put me in a safe place
So I won't get lost.
Caress my body
With your thoughts.
Comfort me with
Your stamps of kisses.
Don't send it express
Or even in a box.
Send it slow and constant.
Small but filled with love
And patience.

Pray over the contents of
The envelope as you do
Your own life.
Occupy your mind with
Something else instead of
Worrying about how long
The delivery will take.

When you are sure that
You have thoroughly
Enveloped me in your love,
Toss it into the wind to God.

My Prayer

Dear Allah, Jah, God, Heavenly Father,

Show me the way to you.
I have become weak from this life.
Send down to me a triple taste of your love,
Help me endure what you have set in my path.

It may seem as though
I have not accepted my path or you.
But I have, I accept it, I accept you.
This pain I have I know will not last always.
This pain I know is nothing compared to the pain of others.

All I ask is that you hear me,
that you guide me,
and that you help me to understand the lessons of my path.

Even though I cannot see you,
I can feel you holding me
when nobody else can.
Forever, I will remain
your warrior.

Give me the strength
to be an example of your power
through my actions.

Many do not realize
that all the things beautiful
have come from you.

I do.

Show me the way to you,
for this particular obstacle
requires your resistance.

Lisa Decker

Leah

After eleven months with no word of her, we presumed her dead. The last time we had seen her, she had been fighting with my mom over who was going to do the dishes. She had been pumped up with drugs that never soothed her Tourettes. I had been fixing myself a plate of spaghetti at the time. Used to their screams, I went on into the living room to eat and watch TV. Leah burst in taking my plate of spaghetti and throwing it against the wall, splattering the plate and staining our wallpaper with a wet orange glow. If I had known then, I wouldn't have cleaned it up after she left and my mother went back to her room, slamming the door in hot, blind anger.

Orion

Compel me to top the glistening temples and break my tongue free from any pure secrets hidden there or shy beauties that are denied by those who can't bear to climb with me. Tell me to jump, to reach out to gather the blueness of the sky in order to help lead the ocean back to its

tavern of warmth where the stars dance
upon it and yet never let it know. Tell me
to climb the dome of the rock until I am
clean and scrubbed fresh from the inside-
out with pounds of laughter and white
praises that come from being alive. In-
vite me to walk into the arms of feath-
ered night and gently waft the salt-sand
with legs of silver light. Press me to drop
to my shouting knees in purple ecstasy
in praise of the altar and the message.

David Elias

Waitress

Tight breasts jarred with each step,
The pinging of coins
Within a cotton pocket.
Shiny black loafers
Slide forward on polished wood.

Coiled hair held by pins
Soft freckles on white skin
Painted lips repeat orders
Glistening under yellow lights.
Pen on paper, scratching.

Men reek of beer
Unshaved, coming untied at the collar
As they grasp, searching for curves
offering, asking what \$20
Will get.

A smile, no thank you
She twirls away amongst the bustle
Empty tray save for three dollars
She stops, briefly
To pat the head of the ten year old
Who waits for mommy.

Ryan D. Fong

**Vomiting with a Friend Who Has Been Reading
Paulo Freire**

para mere, y mucha' gracia' robert haas

August humidity is here. Bachata
melodies fill the guaguas,
but Clinica Abreu gathers the silence.

She holds me between the heavens
in the slow motion of hospital time.
Meredith is sighing:

for her I am not just another volunteer
in Loma, with salmonella or dengue.
We have stopped talking
about Pedagogy of the Oppressed
about A.B.C.D.
and youth-to-youth development.
Our ears are submerged
in the drips of the IV. And Meredith,
reaching empathetically,

fingernails painted pink,
with glossy Dominican cosmetics,
goes to empty the chamber pot.

The Red Capitalist

for erin, with thanks to william carlos williams

so much depends
upon

a great sense
of irony

while dancing fluidly
like a muppet

and assassinating
presidents.

Portrait of My Friend as a 21 Year Old Young Man

for tim, with thanks to rilke

In the eyes: contemplations. The brow: as if it could feel
a far off Catholic guilt. Around the lips, a drooping
innocence—laughing, though there is some sorrowfulness.
Under the disheveled tresses of questionable fashion
on a Lennon-esque butterfly stitched shirt:
thrift store puppy salvation. Both hands stay
with fingertips together, barely touching, calm
and now almost radiating tension, as if they
were ready to grasp a forgotten irony beyond.
And all the rest is cloaked about him,
so cloudy, that I want to understand
this figure as he emerges out of the background.

Oh quickly disappearing time,
evades my more slowly disappearing embrace.

Melissa Johnson

Merry Go Round

She sits, with finger poised, curling
around the smoky ink of silk that falls,
around her hand, down her arm,
she twirls, what's on her mind that makes
her long slender, piano hands,
snake through the dark tresses, is she thinking
about a lover, or how we came to visit today or deaths
I watch from my corner
marveling at how she twists the long strands,
I think in my child's mind, how I'd like to be
there, twisting in the merry go round of her hair,
she looks up twisting she smiles, that smile
that I know well, but eventually the twisting has to stop
I now sit in the front of the church in my starched,
black dress and Mary Janes, I look over
at the pristine ivory casket thinking it should be blue,
my hand wanders up to my own, thin locks, taking a short, pudgy
finger,
I twirl it around my own hair, maybe I think
the twisting never stops.

Blue

Blue house

On the outside you seemed cheerful, normal.

Children played within your walls.

White picket fence lined your boundaries.

Nobody knew it was just a façade.

Nobody knew the toxic danger that loomed in your doors.

Blue house

In which Grandma used to feed me chicken soup, when I was
sick.

I was always sick within your walls.

Misty my puppy was magic, she knew the secret.

She knew what was hiding.

She knew that appearances weren't what they seemed to be.

Blue house

In which the bastard lived, the house knew the secret

It's harbored many secrets across the decades.

I remember when I was nine, I always scrambled away.

To hide, you creaked and moaned, warning me to run away.

Blue house

You had me in your grip, you would never let me go.

I wish I could make a bonfire of you, to watch you go up in flames.

To eradicate the memories.

Blue house

There's a photograph of me sitting in you I was about 12.

I'm wearing a mango colored outfit

I look foolish.

I'm sullen, choleric and look and like I need to leap from the
picture and escape.

Marla Johnson

i have your coat

(Reply to William Butler Yeats'. 'A Coat')

i have your coat,
i found it on the lawn,
yet i do not wish
to wear it,
carry it,
or put it on.
i wish to return it,
even though it kept me warm.
i rather compose my own blue-patched coat
and then drape it on my arm.

A hidden cloth

now I am counting
and on to the seventh I roll,
but words are just like colors,
images and symbols,
they too lose meaning
and I lose myself
in a hidden cloth
of coloring words.

Lisa Monie

The Dark World of Love: A Set of Six Sonnets

A story that takes place within a dark world about one dark soul and one that appeared to be like the sun.

Love Believed

I love you within this dark world of yours.
Listening to the crickets solemn song,
Knowing life will never really be ours.
I sit in the dark realizing it's wrong.
Despite all the fates against our dim lives,
We have love not unlike star-crossed lovers.
The night air brings us winged dragonflies
Encircling our true air with silvers.
No fear is allow'd in this world of mine.
The darkness is a comfort to my mind
For you are out there within the starshine,
Eager for your mortal maid to entwine.
 Allow the fates to absolve and bless us
 To live together and be sensuous."

Dark Love

Come down to me within my arms and wish.
The night plays whisper'd rain around the seams
Delivers poor souls from a candle wish.
Do you know Apollo's blazing sunbeams?
His fingers reaching out in destruction.
I know Luna, my love and protector.
Her beauty is a mirror reflection.
Her brother is mine enemy and more.
You are now my Luna and have her art.

You know my life is different than thine
Sacrilegious to your own beating heart
Yet you still come unto my arms and dine.
 Mine own hell is mine own only true love.
 My dear Luna supplies mine only dove.

The Dark Gift

You took me in your cold arms in darkness
Wrestling me upon the satin bed,
Where I had no strength, you took simpleness
Leaving me with strength unlike the dead.
But dead I was and a strange life anew,
Where life meant a fountain of a red gush.
The only light I know is from the dew,
Beauty is the night garden full and lush.
I will never know Apollo's true light,
Nor the sense of my beating heart, true love.
Eternal dark will always be my sight.
To think you're all that is left high above.
 I can never forgive your simple soul,
 Because mine is dark as the fire's coal.

Hair matted to my skull drips drops of dew
Upon the dark dyed lace and satin.
Dare to come within my world anew.
Restless sleep listening to the rotten.
With dreams exposing likeable fire.
Watching you walk under the lights a glare.
I die once a day on the slate and pyre.
I know all I'll have is this dripping hair
This snow white, senseless, hard and icy skin
That no touch can challenge penetration.
Once it was a loving man who cut in,
Like the moon, he has a cruel reflection.
 He tempted with false beauty and a lie.
 He took me in his arms and let me die.

Mistaken Action

Under the beauteous Luna I wait
Pondering on my new situation
I can never look back; it is too late;
She has brought me utter desolation.
Should I await Apollo's fingertips?
Or learn the meaning of sulph'rous brimstone
A fiery hell with burning crypts
And death everlasting all alone?
What can I do without my dear Luna?
My sanctity and sanity are her
My spirit lies inside her rays; Luna
Has taken my life as I have done her.
 My greatest hope of love became my sin,
 I shall no longer live in her, within.

Forgiveness

Walking into our dwelling, I noticed
Your body charred by Apollo's fingers,
I fell to my knees in blood eyed distress.
Because of lamentations that lingered?
My condition is what you forced on me,
And I do blame you for this, my awful state,
But now, seen in this form of ebony
I can no longer think on it as rape.
My love has been there even through my hate.
I pray you forgive me, for I do you.
I take you and release you to your fate,
My dark love and I will always be you.
 Let your dear Luna take you to your grace.
 I will always live for you in your place

Allison Outschoorn

Queen

Mama, I miss your soups;
the burnt clay pots of tender
chicken, fiery peppercorns,
the soft underbellies of carrots.

As I slice a cabbage eye,
I see you walk the road
arms low, straining under those
bags bursting with plump vegetables.

Eveline

The blackthorn stick lies about,
advertising her father's violence.
The bohemian girl, face of
bronze like an illumined porthole,
sits with the organ player
in the close dark room.
Nausea sprawls in her stomach
like a helpless animal.
The frenzied iron glows as she
makes toast on the skillet.
Maybe he would drown her.

Eva Sevcikova

Memoirs of an Arawak Man *

(dedicated to the misleadingly glorified memory of Christopher Columbus)

Our island's beaches made a generous offering
to you and all your men.
Water for your dry lips.
Food for your famished stomachs.
Gentle breeze for your frenzied breaths.
Speaking oddly and anticipating golden palaces,
you at first drank our water, ate our food
and then razed our huts.
Your lips dripped with false kindness
and your eyes dreamed with a treacherous light.
In the name of human progress,
you cut our skins and hearts into pieces
and hanged them low at your waist
to show off to your King.

*I am an Arawak man, I say,
and my spear may be made of cane
and my skin may not be white
and my men may not have arms to fight
But on the ground of my native soil
yes, I am tawny and royal.*

Our island's people made a generous offering
to you and your men:
gifts for soothing your aching souls,
things we only had one of,
our trust and interest in your three floating huts.
Speaking oddly and anticipating golden palaces,
you at first took our parrots and cotton and spears

and in return threw at us glass beads and hawk's bells.
In the name of human progress,
you cut our gods and stories into pieces
and wrote about them in your journals
to make them immortal.

*I am an Arawak man, I say,
and my spear may be made of cane
and my skin may not be white
and my men may not have arms to fight
But on the ground of my native soil
yes, I am tawny and royal.*

* The Arawaks were the native inhabitants of the Bahama Islands at the time of Columbus arrival in October 1492.

Waking Up in the Morning

I thought his chest'd be full of petals;
I reached over
and pricked on medals.

Tim Tiernan

A Church Becomes a Shelter During War

Outside, a motherless Kosovar child,
hysterical, screams like an air siren
for history trying to make echo.
She loved him, swept him away from the fires
minutes ago. He'll forget this I'll say.
He freezes, buries what self's left of self
in bottomless breasts as one final nudge.

Inside a southern Californian church
the usual salvation occupies
the minds of priest and people in the clouds,
lurching in their pews forgetting sometimes
flesh is holier, and that dead is dead.
Forget your souls, I pray. Deacon sneezes—
God speaking through: Remember my body.

Phobia

In summer I harvested the egg sacks
of the black widows who hid under rocks,
scooped them into a Dixie cup and lit
the rim. Part of the joy was the knowing
the increase of heat, the gradual doom,
and the patience I spent to magnify
the sun into a focused pin of light
until the cup smoked, and soon I could hear
the crackle of the sacks dissolving all
of them, except one I thought I saw push
the skin to escape, and then the inky,

plastic scent grew like the stench of flesh of
some tinier form, less known, uglier—
the part of evil that confounded me.

Reconstructing

This city's colorless,
but color's supposed to distinguish
and I can't tell this one from another:
the infinite line-striped lots,
the store to store sameness.

I remember the first time I read *city*
I pronounced it *kitty* and saw in my reading book
atop the purple skyscraper
magnificent whiskers, a fluffy tail
and two yellow lights, shades drawn.
I grew to like the word.

Now when I see *suburbs*
I think of still-life dirty fruit
stark against a big, white wall.
Or Rilke's panther who ambulates
the cage with no outer world.
Or the wilderness framed as a park.

And when I drive under a 605 overpass:
orange, bubbly taggings baffle, language
I can't decode. I catch myself romanticizing,
gawking at its meaning, at its rich colors amidst
the smogged freeway sign. And I think,
Headed north, I can call that beautiful.

Suburban Site

Miser white crows guard
three “property of city” trash bins.
The three of them,

defend pigeon-toed
in buttocks-raised suspicion; beaks flip
crumbed treasure treats.

It appears to be
spicy sour cream potato chips—
dank, gourmet crap.

I bike one mile past—
bougainvilleaeas measure the extinct
blue yuppie homes—

tracked, sorted, lined like
fossil bones. I bike a plain of plain;
plants there merely

decorate; lawns paint.
They’re not there to grow but stand and scare
all ugliness.

Ornamentation.
On the rooftops, wind veins west, then east
squeaks. The steal caws.

Cars pull up driveways.
The garage doors open, eat the cars.
No one is seen.

Antonio Trepesowsky

A Happy Sonnet

From out of my sweet dreams I start to you
Not knowing yet the reason why I wake.
Then, finding you, I wish my dreams renew.
Not daunted you alert me of your state.
Your feet upon the ground can tread so light,
Yet you ascend my bed with heavy gait.
I know how gentle sweet your voice takes flight,
But morn, a banshee call to me berate.
The harder I ignore, more pestered be.
Your pleasure call o'erflows my soul with guilt.
Your cold wet touch upon my cheek foresee,
And so I rise to satiate your built.
Though to a lover one may think each line,
One would be wrong. You are but my feline.

Sonnet

(Inspired by *I Will Survive*)

At first I was afraid, encased in stone
Believing that away from you I'll die
Yet midnight pondering of your sin o'ergrown
Renewed my strength to live out of your eye.
And lo! From space, depressed, you return.
Fool I for not the locksmith yet employed.
So hie ye, hie ye hence, you now I spurn.
Revolve you in your steps unwelcome heard.
My heart you have laid waste, in pieces dashed.
Was I to crumble at your tart adieu?
Was I so prematurely to be lashed
Into my still untimely grave entombed?
O you the fool to think such thoughts, not I,
For I know how to love. I will survive!

Kristine Welter

Never Enough Alone

You once told me I am the cheese in your macaroni.
I am the cherry on your sundae, the lime in your
Corona and maybe even an olive in your martini:
shaken not stirred.

I am the chips that come with your
burger and the side salad
for starters.

It was romantic and exciting.
Out to late dinners, dimly lit with votives
scattered on plastic cloths.

An occasional movie quickly skirting
out the back exit.

Then back to your place, letting
the answering machine get it.

Or mine, your pager humming
off the nightstand onto tender carpeting.

Warms hands and aggressive lips, lifting me
onto you, into you. With you,
always perfect and handsome.

Breaking my sentences in two,
knowing what I wanted to say next.

Let's not waste our time talking.

You once told me I am the cheese to go with
your macaroni. I looked at your noodle and
decided we would make a
substantial meal. The two of us,
a glass of milk and some raw carrots.

Raw. How you

rubbed me that night. The night
you spoke to me in metaphors until
the moment we were at my door, in my apartment,
clothes on, clothes on the floor,
on the counter, on the sofa, on the cat.
Clothes off.

Me on my side and you on me.

I didn't have a side.

It was quick, raw, not quite
stirred all the way, our meal.

Milk spilled on the counter and left
to spoil. You left, dirty. You left me
dirty, here, alone.

Raw.

You talked in metaphors,
around the bush and down my throat.
I swallowed.

Your salt lingering on my tongue, I realize
now that you were right.

I am the cheese in your macaroni,
And I have, too many times, been the catsup
on your hotdog, the butter
on your potato, the jelly
of your PBJ.

Yes, that was me.

You spoke to me in metaphors, unable to tell me
what you were really feeling:

Ravenous.

I'm only the side dish of your three course meal.
A little extra flavor, adding
texture to your life and nothing to your soul.
Just enough to sustain you.
Never enough for true sustenance.

Never enough alone.

Playwriting

"English 390 - 'Shakespeare in Love' Its Plays and Their Context"

by Antonio Trepesowsky

THE CAST:

Real World Characters

SM Sean Morris
R1 Reader 1
R2 Reader 2
R3 Reader 3
OSV Off stage voice
Ech Echo

Shakespearean Characters

Val Valentine (Two Gents)
Pro Proteus (Two Gents)
Spd Speed (Two Gents)
Lau Launce (Two Gents)
Bot Bottom (Midsummer)
Tou Touchstone (As You Like It)
Dog Dogberry (Much Ado)
Ben Benedick (Much Ado)
Bea Beatrice (Much Ado)
Fes Feste (Twelfth Night)
Rom Romeo (Romeo and Juliet)
Jul Juliet (Romeo and Juliet)
Per Pericles (Pericles)
Ham Hamlet (Hamlet)

Marlowe Characters

Gui Guise (Massacre at Paris)
Fau Faustus (Faustus)
Mep Mephistophiles (Faustus)

Others

Ros Romeus (Arthur Brooke)

Fox (Volpone, Ben Johnson)

Act I. Scene I.

The Setting: The stage is divided up into two parts. Two-thirds of the stage consist of a classroom setting with chalkboard and approximately 20 chair/desks with large teacher desk between the desk rows and chalkboard. The other third is the exterior of the classroom, which is a hallway. There is a sign in the hallway that says, "Hallway Echoes. Talk Quietly". In the classroom facing the audience is a clock, which starts at 12:54. When the play starts, the clock starts and runs till the play ends. The soundtrack to "Shakespeare in Love" plays continually.

Throughout the first few minutes of the play random students enter and take their seats. They open their backpacks and pull out The Riverside Shakespeare and begin to read Two Gentleman of Verona

Enter Valentine and Proteus

Val. I already told you Proteus that I'm going to Italy for a semester abroad. I know I told you I would room with you but I'm afraid that you'll just have to get a different roommate.

Pro. O Valentine, if you have to go at least think on me in your travels and when you see treasures of the world take a picture for me.

Val. And you tell me all about how Julia and you work out though I don't know what you see in her. I hope you do not swim the Hellespont like poor Leander did two years back. The poor fool was so overcome with love, and look what happened to him.

Pro. Don't you worry about me. I'll write to you every week and keep you updated on all the gossip. Is there anything in particular that you want to see?

Val. I'm really interested in the virgin forests of Europe. You know the ones not polluted yet by nuclear activity. But I really must be leaving now lest I miss my ship.

Pro. You mean flight

Val. A flight of fancy?

Pro. You're getting to Europe in a daydream?

Val. No! With the transporter.

Pro. Oh, of course. I feel foolish. (*Exit Valentine*) He after honor hunts, I after love. But here come more sheep. I wonder where the shepherd is?

Enter clowns (Speed, Launce with an actual pet crab, Bottom with a Goofy hat, Dogberry, Touchstone, Feste). They find seats but quickly start a game of musical chairs except for Launce who cries every time crab pinches him, causing the clowns to sit as if the music had stopped. This continues until the clock reaches 1p.m. A bell tolls the time off stage. Shakespearean characters freeze as all three readers look up simultaneously. They remain frozen until the readers start to read again.

R1. When's the teacher getting here?

R2. Class does start at one, right?

R3. Who's the teacher?

R1. Um, do you know?

R2. (*Notices everyone is talking in questions*) Why are we all talking in questions?

R3. Are we?

R1. Why do you ask?

R2. (*Makes a decision*) Sean Morris. (Cringes, nothing happens. Relaxes)

OSV Statement, five love.

All three readers speak at once

R2. What was that?

R1, R3 Who is Sean Morris?

R2. (*Confused*) The instructor

OSV Statement. Thirty love

R2. What was that?

OSV Repetition. Forty love

R3. Did you hear something?

R1. Are you OK?

R3. Are you sick?

R1. Were you up late?
 R3. Did you do the reading?
 R1. Do you normally talk to yourself?
 R3. You aren't schizophrenic, are you?
 R1. Have you been to a psychiatrist?
 R3. Do you have an Oedipus complex?
 R2. *(Angrily)* NO!
 OSV Statement. Game.
 R2. Aah! Don't ask any more questions. Sean always comes to class 5 minutes late so that latecomers don't interrupt class. Now read!
R1 and R3 give each other a look. All three read. The clowns come alive.
 Tou. Hey Bottom, what's with the hat?
 Bot. It just seemed to fit me.
 Tou Do you have the Midas touch too or do you just like long ears, for if you have the touch of that ancient Greek I'll become your best friend though I never shake your hand.
 Bot. Who is Midas? Is he a tyrant or a lover? Let him be a tyrant. I'd rather be a Hercules than a Leander. "The raging rocks..."
 Fes. You are an ass.
 Dog. Nay masters, I pray you. Let it be writ that I am an ass. (Walks to chalkboard and writes "Dogberry is an ass"). I feel so much better now.
 Fes Yes Dogberry you are an ass but I warrant that Bottom is too.
 Tou Prove, prove.
 Bot. Hey!
 Fes (As Feste says each phrase Bottom nods approval with more and more shock) Do you not have long ears, hair on your face, bray when you laugh, have a stubborn nature, take on too many parts till you carry all the burden, dream of fairies?
 Bot. *(Aghast)* How did you know about that?
 Tou Do you?
 Bot. Yes.

Fes Then you are an ass for fairies don't exist.
Tou I would have thought it for all the other reasons.
Dog. I'm an ass too.
Bot. Do you dream of fairies?
Dog. They talk to me. Don't get jealous cause you can't hear them.

Meanwhile

Spd. Launce, I didn't know you were taking this class. What are you writing?

Lau. Doesn't matter to you. You can't read anyway.

Spd. I most certainly can you knavish motley-minded miscreant.

Lau. Prove it.

Spd. *Reading*

I dote upon you daily for a smile
For I have yet to see one on your face
Your skin is blushed pink all the while
I walk with you to every single place.
You claw at me so many times a day.
That I am nearly as red as you are.
I think this is your own most special way
To show your 'ffection thus 'tis me you mar.
What is this?

Lau. It's my poem to Crab here.

Spd. It's a crab. It's a crab's nature to pinch just as crabs walk sideways too. Furthermore crabs can't smile because they have no lips. We eat crabs.

Lau. NO! You carnivore, villain, saucy fat-kidneyed gull-catcher.

Spd. Enough Launce, have you seen my master? I can't find him anywhere.

Lau. I have, you yeasty raw-boned dogfish.

Spd. Pax. Tell me where he is gone so that his Speed may join him.

Lau. Speed will need to make haste for his master is off to the docks though he never said a word to poor Launce nor Crab here.

Spd. The docks! You mean airport, for his flight right?

Lau. A flight of fancy, a daydream.

Pro. No! A transporter.

Spd & Lau. Oh, of course. I feel foolish.

Spd. Why didn't you tell me sooner? (Exits)

Lau. Hah, I hope he gets his allowance cut. Serves him right for reading my poetry and insulting crab here.

Enter Twins Romeo and Romeus, Benedick, Beatrice, Guise and Faustus. They all take their seats. Enter Sean Morris

SM OK. I certainly hope that your break was enjoyable. I'm Sean Morris and this is English 390. Hopefully you got my email and were able to read ahead in some plays while you were opening presents and eating large dinners. Those of you who got my email know that we have an extensive list of readings from Ben Johnson's *Volpone* to Marlowe, John Webster, Tom Stoppard, and of course Shakespeare. I'll start by handing out the syllabus and reviewing it. On the front page you'll find my office hours, phone numbers, and email address. This is followed by a brief course description. Reading "The Miramax film Shakespeare in Love found tremendous critical and popular success ...

The lights in the classroom dim a little as the hallway becomes illuminated. Enter Hamlet into hallway.

Ham. To go to class or not to go to class.

Ech Not to be

Ham. Whether tis nobler for the mind to earn the grade

Ech Earn the grave.

Ham. And suffer the hardships of homework. For if I go to class my vacation will end.

Ech Will end.

Ham. To class, to sleep, perchance to dream, Aye there is the rub. For in such dreams my grade will drift away.

Ech My grave ... away.

Ham. Thus my conscience does rankle my sins and tell me that I earn the grade I get.

Ech Earn the grave I get.

Ham. Conscience, I love thee not. So get thee to a nunnery! I'll not go to class.

Ech Not go to class.

Ham. That was the strangest echo I've ever heard. (*Exits*)

Lights dim back up in classroom.

SM So that is it for the syllabus. Are there any questions?

Enter Pericles

Per. Hi, I'm Pericles. This is my cameo appearance. Is anyone hungry? I have a whole backpack full of grain. No? OK. I guess I'll be going then. *Exits*

SM That was weird.

Gui Why are we studying the works of a non-Catholic? Shouldn't we burn his books as heretical?

SM Well, those are interesting questions. Would anyone else care to comment? Yes, Faustus.

Fau Frankly, I don't see the logic in believing in any divinity. Science can answer every question as long as you keep on searching for their answers.

Gui Heretic, pagan, atheist. Where is my brother the cardinal? An excommunication is needed at once! Soldiers come and arrest this man. In fact, not just him but everyone in this room too.

There is a puff of smoke and it clears to show Guise with horns on his head.

Oh monstrous, sorcerer, help, help!

Fau I was so hoping this class would be more interesting than Field Botany but I guess not. Mephistopheles, take this rogue away. Is this the face that killed a thousand Huguenots and burned the countless houses of Paris?

Enter Mephistopheles

Mep Does anyone want to play "Sell Your Soul"? It would only be for pretend. Honest! No huh. You sure? OK, fine.

Mephistophiles drags Guise screaming out of the classroom followed by Faustus who leaves behind his book.

SM Umm, Benedick, why don't you start reading aloud from "The Reckoning of Christopher Marlowe" while I find out what is going on with those two. *Exits*

Fes Methinks that Guise was an ass.

Dog I'm the ass.

Ben *Begins to read from the Marlowe book. At first the class*

is silent and attentive but they quickly loose interest in the reading. Suddenly a fox enters the classroom and everyone except Benedick is distracted. Benedick is enjoying the sound of his voice too much to notice. The fox suddenly faints in the middle of the room. No one is certain what to do. Launce gets up to see if the fox is all right. The fox grabs Crab and races out of the room. Launce, traumatized, races after the fox and out of the room

Bot. Clowns, that was unacceptable. Our poor friend Launce chasing a fox all by himself.

Fes I agree with Bottom. For it takes many hounds to track down a fox.

Tou Further, if we hurry not to his aid there will be none of Crab left.

Dog Marry sirs, this fox has committed false illnesses, moreover it has acted untruths, secondarily, it steals one's property, sixth and lastly, it has belied a clown, thirdly, it has kidnapped a youth, and to conclude it has made an ass of a clown who had not yet been proven one.

Tou Good Dogberry is right. We must rally to his aid! (*Exeunt clowns*).

Through it all Benedick is still reading oblivious.

Bea I wonder that you will still be talking Signor Benedick, nobody marks you.

Ben What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?

Bea Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Surely the whole class will convert to disdain if you continue to read.

Ben Yet did not the instructor ask me to read? But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Bea A dear happiness to women everywhere, they would else have been ...

Enter Juliet accompanied by theme from Tchaikovski's Fantasy on Romeo and Juliet.

Rom But soft, what light through yonder doorway breaks?

Ros Is that my Juliet? She comes from the east as the sun.

Rom Your Juliet?!! I saw her first.

Ros So, I'm older. I can beat you up. I claim her by the Verona law of Elders.

Rom Law of Elders? Is that some fantasy that Queen Mab gave you? There's no such thing.

Ros Hah. You don't even know that Verona has no shoreline. No Queen Mab. What an idiot!

Ben Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again?

Enter Sean Morris

SM I'm afraid class will have to be dismissed early today. I need to fill out a whole bunch of paperwork for campus safety. I think Faustus will probably be expelled from the school and Guise is now undergoing a high-speed chase. Somehow Guise managed to change his clothes. I just saw him on TV and he's "disguised as a woman". I just don't know what happened.

Jul Perhaps it's a mystery.

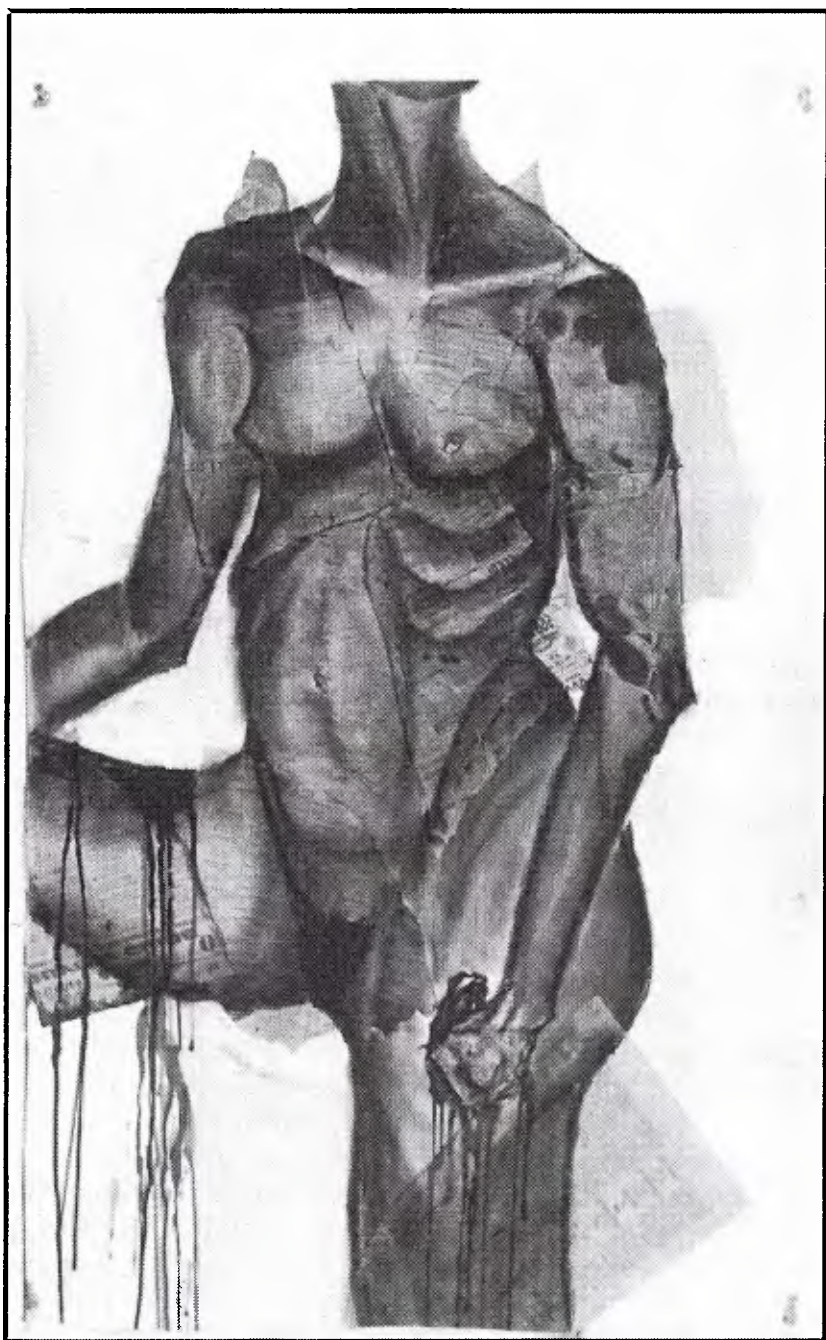
Exeunt all but Readers 1, 2, and 3

R1 Shakespeare sure is confusing.

R2 It's even worse when you try cramming it all into 22 days instead of 16 weeks.

R3 Perhaps we'll watch the movie tomorrow.

R1 & R2 Perhaps. Exeunt



Untitled, 2000 by Katherine Baskett

Fiction

Sunday Morning

by Steve Alvarado

Well, so yesterday I became a criminal. Don't sit there disapproving of me. Everyone is a criminal. Alfred Hitchcock had Cary Grant prove that in 1955. At one time or another we have all taken a hotel towel, a pen, a car. By now the overt criminal tendencies of the populace should be common knowledge.

It was a dark and stormy night. Ok, it was really a bright and sunny Sunday morning. There really are only two ways to begin a story:

-- "It was a dark and stormy night."

or

-- "Once upon a time ..."

One beginning foretells sinister events. Meanwhile, the other beginning calls forth images of shiny metal men on what must be very tired horses rescuing spoiled, overdressed princesses. (Yes, overdressed – since when is dragon slaying a formal affair?) Weighing the choices carefully in a thoughtless half second, I chose the former.

So, on this dark and bright and stormy and sunny Sunday night morning, I strolled right into Denny's. I didn't want to go to Denny's, no one ever does. The whole business of this restaurant chain is based on people who can't think of anywhere else to go.

You are at a hotel in a strange town, and you need something for breakfast other than half-cooked egg on petrified McMuffin. What is the next familiar beacon on the horizon? Denny's. You are at a bar until the large neckless man kicks you out at 3 a.m. You need food. You need a place that is actually open for business, which also has lovely bathrooms for later regularity adventures. You need Denny's.

I didn't know where to go myself on that morning. Things were a little muddled, a little blurred – like too many bugs on my windshield smearing up the view. I wouldn't say that things were going wrong. The things just didn't know where they were going. Where

do things go when they don't know where they're going? Denny's. I had been there before. I didn't have a life like everyone else. I didn't live a life like everyone else. I lived a life like everyone in my head. Life was more interesting there. Nowhere on this earth was as interesting, funny, dangerous, scary, beautiful, or silly as the world I lived in.

The weather was fine there that morning. The birds were flying over the pies, and there was a slight breeze under the table. I wish I could say that everyone in the place was happy, that it was a grand, wonderful scene. Things don't always form up like jello moulds. My mind had a little too much cold water, not enough hot. Jello never forms up under those circumstances. One foot of my little gray blob was still back in the other world. I was there because there was nowhere else to go. What else was there to do but be there for distraction?

I strolled right into Denny's and demanded, in a meek and polite fashion, *Moons Over My Hammy*. Because, really, what else should a free person in a free country do? The real hallmark of our democracy is our right to order fattening, un-nutritious food with silly names while surrounded by hotel quality unoriginal artwork. I feel free just thinking about it. Do you think Mr. Ivan Q Public ever executed such a bold action under Stalin's regime? Not a chance. This is the true gift of capitalism.

You see, communism was really a noble idea in its socialist lar-vae stage. Marx, that cute, fuzzy little caterpillar, just wanted everyone to have enough.

*In admiring the fuzzy, striped aesthetic of Mr. Marx,
I think we'll take the creative license to ignore
the absolute dullness of making everyone
middle class, because the appalling idea of a
country full of Ozzie & Harriet's is too much to bear.*

But, what Stalin did (and, I'll pick on Stalin rather than Lenin because 30 years of continuous rule carries some responsibility with it) was all too deep. He took all of the shallow, silly, fast food fun out

of life. Everything can't be *War and Peace*, you need a little TV Guide thrown in sometimes. Notice that when communism retreated from our Soviet super-sister, McDonald's was ready and waiting to advance. Big Macs and borsht for everyone. Thus, as a freedom loving capitalist, Moons over My Hammy. Besides, it's just fun to say. Moons over My Hammy, Moons over My Hammy, Moons over My Hammy!

When did I have time to mull over so many deep, penetrating sociological subjects? I was at Denny's, the food doesn't come after you order it. You have to have the patience of a Zen Buddhist on Quaaludes, and learn to observe and appreciate your environment. So, there I sat admiring the teal textures of the classically moulded vinyl booths. I sat admiring the brown, wrinkled textures of my waitress. I sat admiring the beautiful sad clown work on the south wall. I sat admiring that painting so much I even had to get up for a closer look. I don't think that family liked me standing in their booth, though.

That's when I spotted them, a girl and her Jimmy. Standing in that booth, I felt a certain pull toward – well, I felt a lady pulling me out of their booth – adventure. Jimmy wasn't his real name. Maybe it was his pen name, or his gun name, or his mom's name. Maybe her last boyfriend was named Jimmy, and she couldn't quite kick the habit in the dark throws of passion. Maybe her father's lover was named Jimmy and was a cross dresser who used to work at another Denny's. Maybe he really knows how to jimmy a lock from his long tenure as a locksmith in Pocatello, Idaho. By the way, if anyone is planning a trip to the great burg of Pocatello, don't tell them I sent you, unless you run into Bob. Then tell Bob he owes me money.

I didn't ask about Jimmy's name, I just knew. The required equipment list for any multi-participant crime, such as group robbery, clearly states that a girl and her Jimmy are required. You just couldn't pick an Avon Lady and her Auto Mechanic to perpetrate a grand robbery of a candy store. You would need someone to pick the lock. This is not to say that an Avon lady doesn't possess a myriad of interesting skills outside of their profession. I once had a soufflé made by one at my local authorized Yugo service center. Of course, everyone at Yugo had other jobs, seeing as Yugoslavia is no

longer a country. Hey, didn't Jimmy used to be a locksmith?

I didn't immediately assume these perfect strangers were going to rob the place. That would be positively rude. Assumptions never work out. Didn't everyone on Sesame Street assume *Snuffleupagus* was not real. Look at the price their all paying for that wrong assumption, Big Bird's revenge! Mr. Hooper is dead and Elmo has taken over. Personally, I never wanted to tickle the little creep. I did not assume. The evidence was there. The body language spoke to anyone wanting to listen. Trouble is, not too many people ever listen to body language. Maybe we need an interpreter in the corner of the screen like sign language interpreters. Being a professional Body Language interpreter, I was able to easily translate their movements into our layman's English. The air was full of tension, or full of smoke since the kitchen was on fire.

-- Where the hell is our waitress? We've been here for 45 minutes. Why are we even here?

Jimmy didn't realize the absurdity of his question in the middle of a Denny's.

-- We didn't have anywhere else to go, remember? The service here is so bad.

Answered the girl.

I thought the service was wonderful. I had chosen a lovely corner table with a view from which to enjoy my cheerful, helpful service. My waitress was glad to listen to me, and responsive to my inquiries:

-- Waitress! waitress!
-- I got some old lady with low everything waiting at table 6.
What do you want?
-- So, where are you from?
-- I was at the other table over there.
-- Why, that must be a lovely neighborhood. Do you go back

to visit often?

- Yea, whenever somebody sits there.
- I was just thinking about Zen Buddhism. Do you know of it?
- Are you gonna order something else?
- What do you think of those quirky little riddles, they have? Have you ever heard the sound of one hand clapping?
- That makes no sense. Did you want a refill?
- I've never heard one hand clap. Can it? I suppose that is the riddle. Isn't it? Let's see, where is the other hand? Maybe it's tied behind his back, or just gently laid to the side. Maybe he doesn't even have another hand. Have you ever gone to one of those Japanese steak houses where they chop everything up really fast? Why don't we have an American version of a chopping stuff up restaurant? We could have Benny Hanna's Kentucky Chopped Chicken. The colonel would come in his old white, slave holder's suit and cut through fried chicken with a cleaver. Although, the grease might splash up and burn his little white beard, I suppose we could outfit him in white firefighter's boots so he's a flame retardant colonel. He could have little flame retardant sergeants in funny paper hats to help him. They could get hurt without the repercussions of destroying a national icon. So this guy trying to clap worked there at colonel ninja's and got his hand chopped off. They let him keep his paper hat as severance pay. Those hats are an important status symbol to the slacker generation. A good paper hat shows that you are following the creed of your chosen path and not conforming to society's groove. You are a fast foodworker! But what's status when you only have one hand? Sure, he's handicapped and can use this experience as a source of strength. He can even park in the good handicapped parking spots. Yet, he cannot clap. But, what's this I hear? I hear the sound of one hand clapping! He's found out a way to respectfully go to the monster truck rally and

clap with one hand! He dissected the problem to its elemental elements. He simply hit his one hand on his leg. Clapping! Or, is that the sound of one hand hitting? What do you think?

But, for some reason, my waitress had walked away. Did anyone hear clapping?

My waitress was gone. My food hadn't come. I was looking for a man in a paper hat. Jimmy was professing his great need for food while scraping the remnants of the last diner's meal into little shapes resembling former members of the United States Congress.

The last guy to eat at their table had chicken fried steak and eggs, side of biscuits, and hash browns. Really, only the gravy and jelly made it to the dried-up-goop Hall of Fame in Englebrook, Minnesota. Still, those glops of goop were enough to tell the tale, chicken fried steak and eggs.

Some hash browns and genuine country gravy had just slid into the leftover bits of straw paper to evolve into the visage of former speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, a fan of genuine country gravy himself. The girl wanted to know when they were going to get started.

- Get started? We haven't ordered yet. That weirdo across the room keeps calling over the waitress to her table. Does she look like Jesse Helms?
- Did you forget the real reason we even came here?

She was looking at the adjacent gravy-biscuit combo and imagining a nice Pat Schroder portrait.

- We have some things to discuss.
- I know, but, really, what is there to discuss? You want to try to think of silly solutions. There aren't any. We can't pay the bills. We can't pay the rent. That's all.
- Are you sure you don't need some more sausage above the left eye?
- No, Helms has a slow, smarmy look that defies the spicy,

forthright properties of sausage. Calm down a little. If you think too hard about a problem, you never find the solution. If you calm down, relax, and do something else, you find the solution. You think too hard, and too loud.

-- Were you talking about politicians or finance?

She didn't know what to think about the federal trade deficit or the situation. Jimmy never wanted to discuss things. She hated the way he always talked over her when the subject wasn't of his choice.

-- I just want to talk about it.

No one can be a Body Language interpreter with a church youth group seated in the non-smoking, non-swearing, non-looking at each other in a lavish fashion section, a church youth group seated in between me and my interpreters.

-- Waitress! Waitress!

-- What do you want now?

-- Can they sit somewhere else?

-- No, but why do you want to know

-- I can't see the solutions. I want to know if John Glenn is in the gravy, he was a respected member of Congress, not to mention a real, live astronaut!

The look wasn't exactly one of annoyance or even puzzlement. The look was really one of utter ... well, there is nothing that can be described as "utter" anything unless you're a cow. Though she was an unpleasant woman, she was not of bovine descent. The look was not good.

-- Listen, lady, your food is gonna be ready soon. After that I don't want to hear from you again. Understand?

The rude tone and obvious disdain in her remarks left me livid. I tried to think of an appropriate response.

-- Do you mean to tell me that as a dedicated and capable employee of Denny's, you will not be striving to fulfill my, the customer's, needs for a pleasant and enjoyable dining experience? Am I to understand you will not be giving 100% to your job, one that is coveted by waitresses of Bob's Big Boy around the country? I have asked for a few simple requests which are not outside the boundaries of your job, and here you will not be coming back to even check on me or let me tell a large group of profit potential customers to move out of my way. I, at least, deserve for you to wait until I am in the midst of chewing, with my mouth full, and ask if everything is alright. Can I at least have that privilege?

Or, as it came out of my mouth,

-- Ok. Can I move or not?

Exasperation forced a calmness over her being.

-- That table over there. The one with food already on it. That table just hasn't been cleaned yet.

-- Can we hurry? I'm missing the conversation.

-- Move.

Diplomacy and rational debate will solve any situation. My new table didn't have as nice of a view, but it came with it's own dinner. I now had old coffee, toast crumbs, and a dirty plate with wilted parsley. Looking back to my little friends, the girl seemed disturbed.

-- You mean that you won't even talk to me? I thought ...

-- Listen! You're talking too much ... can you hand me an ear. I need an ear here. Thanks.

I had one in my old coffee. A floating object in the cup distracted me. The ocean faring properties of Texas Toast have not been stud-

ied enough. In the vast sea of decaf, not only can a small crumb withstand prevailing easterly winds from a weather system of bad breath, but it can also maneuver quite well during a stainless steel spoon sea monster attack. The Pentagon may be exploring this phenomenon already. Soon, naval aircraft carriers will have perfectly golden browned Texas Toast slices attached to them to help stabilize, maneuver, and be more buoyant in the water. There may even be a Denny's in the mess hall where a tired sailor could get a turkey dinner. After all, where else is there to go on a ship?

Exasperation is a funny combination of frustration, annoyance, and exhaustion. Jimmy added some disrespect, belittling, and deviant thought process, just to spice it up a little.

-- Just lay off it! I know something to do, but I haven't decided on it yet. I don't know if we can do it.

A light like a correctly guessed letter on Wheel of Fortune appeared in her face, and Vanna turned the letter gently.

-- Tell me!

She didn't want to push him to buy a vowel just yet.

-- In an abstruse dilemma, the only course of action can sometimes be one of disconsolateness, or a misdeed on orthodoxy.

-- I don't even know what you just said.

-- We gotta steal some money somehow.

-- What are we going to do, rob someplace? We can't even coordinate our lives, much less a robbery that we can get away with.

Robbery can be a tricky business. One has to know the layout of the intended scene of the crime; the security precautions present, and have a plan. There needs to be a good deal of organization involved to do a thing like that right. The element of surprise is also

a decided advantage. These two didn't appear to have many or any of those elements.

- It can't be that hard. Perfect idiots commit robbery.
- We aren't perfect.

Jimmy was not amused. I was an expert on all aspects of Jimmyism by now. With a full 15 minutes of deep observation under my belt. I had recently been a featured speaker at this year's Society of Jimmyologists and Criminal Dog Dermatologists symposium.

The girl never knew what to do with the silent, disgruntled Jimmy.

- Do you have any ideas? I still don't think this is anything we can do.
- Well, that's encouraging. All we have to do is pick out a convenience store or even a bank. We go in with a gun and tell them to give us money.
- It can't be that simple ...
- You gotta think different! Don't be trying to figure out what's wrong with everything!
- I'm not. It's just too simple. It's a dumb plan. I just don't think we would get ...
- I didn't ask you to think.

The cosmic law of Jimmyologists clearly points out that a Jimmy with that tone of voice was a Jimmy6.0145.21, a Jimmy with stalled thought processes. My skills do, however, fluctuate being only part time scholar, part time interpreter, and part time polytechnic cheese critic for the Hippalo, WI Times-Courier.

I'm known in cheese circles as a sharp critic of the Swiss family. As in relationships between people, a cheese should complement its culinary partner, so they may work in concert for an amicable and flavorful meal. If a cheese is too strong, such as a sharp, conniving Lorraine Swiss, it drowns out its partner and bullies them into their own little plan for the meal. The other food on the plate begins to feel left out and unimportant. At that point, a good neutral bread is called

for to balance, compliment, and referee. All cultures have this officer of the viands, whether it is pita or noodles. Here in the great nation that sprouted the fine establishment I was in, we have our choices to fit the strength and evil motives of the offending plate mate.

-- Jimmy!

The girl either discovered a new strain of antibiotic fungus in the flowing country gravy neck folds of the Strom Thurmond portrait, or she had an idea.

-- You don't have to yell. I'm right here.

-- What about here?

-- What about here. Here, what?

She was right. How many people in for breakfast at their local Denny's expect to be robbed? If I need to stop in at my local Gas 'N' Go, I only do so equipped with full body armor and an anti-Icee device. The bank is another matter.

The bank makes me feel like a criminal for going to cash a check, with all of the security. I might walk in to the bank to cash a check and forget to bring my checkbook. So, there I am without a deposit slip or my account number. The guard is observing me casually. I look around for some deposit slips and one of those imprisoned pens on a chain. When I try to use the pen, the ink is out. What's the matter with these people? Don't they want me to deposit money in their bank? I try to shake the pen to make the ink flow, and the chain breaks! I quickly look to the security cameras with an apologetic smile.

The security guard rushes toward me, mace blazing! "Get down!" I don't know what to do. He's pretty frightened for a professional security officer. I can hear the nothing scary like this has ever happened at the bank before tremor in his voice. "Down on the ground, now! The police are on their way. You don't want to make this thing ugly!" I, for one, as a dignified bank patron, don't appreciate being spoken to in such a manner. I don't think. I react. "I'm not afraid to

use this!" I yell, waving the pen and chain in the air. The security guard jumps back with caution. All the faces in the room slowly change from ordinary dockworkers and brain surgeons to hostages. "I just want a deposit slip and for somebody to tell me my account number! I don't want to do anything crazy, but if any one of you move, I'll ... I'll write on you!!"

I have since switched banks.

An idea had been planted in my head. The girl and her Jimmy were actually the best duo for the job, an unexpected robbery of Denny's. They just needed to hop up on the table with some common, household firearms, put forth a few expletives, and collect their little prize for a wonderful performance. I expected it would be fun to watch.

The girl had outlined an idea to rob the place. Jimmy was very receptive.

-- That's stupid! We don't have any guns. We didn't even bring any expletives. Let's let the thinkers do the thinking.

Jimmy was wrong. Jimmy was what Jimmyologists call a "jerky-jimmy," or in laymen's terms, "nincompoopious maximus jimmanoid." He was functioning very much like a bad cheese, a Lorraine Swiss. A breadish referee was seemingly required. One candidate was immediate, Texas Toast. But, I was no criminal.

What they really needed was a decent plan. The girl had the right idea, but the wrong execution. They had no weapons, no expletives, and no scary visages. A new approach would have to be used. A distraction was what they needed. A great big, annoying distraction to get the attention away from others while they did the deed.

-- Moons Over My Hammy.

Four words spit out and splayed over the table like a loud sneeze. The plate slammed down to the table and rolled around like a top on its wide base, insulted at being handled so carelessly.

-- ... hash browns, toast, and a side of green Jello. You want a refill or am I done here?

This was not a polite inquiry.

-- No, ma'am.

I was too distracted by the plate before me to notice her sarcastic tone or offensive wearing of glitter nail polish with that brown dress. I remembered that no one can eat green Jello without marshmallows.

-- Waitress!

She turned around with a disgusted air, and the eyes of the entire room shot over to me with an annoyed glare. I was a distraction! One word from me and a whole Denny's was torn away from their old English Muffins to rivet attention my way.

-- Never mind.

The room sighed and turned away. I was in no state for marshmallows now.

Two yellow eyes and a round little mouth looked up at me with the expression of a jaundiced Edvard Munch painting. Did I order this killing? I was by no means a vegetarian activist. I was all for killing something that tasted good. But, when the little victim looked at me that was another matter. I began to review the ethics of all the actions of my life. Eggs do that to a person sometimes.

I had been committing small criminal acts all of my life. From the first time I cheated on a test to the last time I filed my income tax, I was a two bit thief. I never stopped to think of those seemingly innocent acts as the terrorist episodes against society that they were. I didn't know why I was this study in deviant psychology.

What caused the behaviors of some of this century's greatest criminals? The answer was right in front of me, carbonated soft drinks. When Coca Cola was first invented, it was a tonic for what

ailed you, a drug. Many might suspect the early presence of cocaine as an ingredient was the greatest danger in the invention of soda. The real criminals in the glass, can, bottle, or plastic big slam are the bubbles, the fizz, the tickle your little nose attraction.

So there America was, in the height of the gilded age, peddling dangerous brown liquid to an unsuspecting public. What was an honest, regular Joe to think, much less a Bob, Gary, or Martha. First, the sweetness, then the cola or unique lymon flavor attracts you. By the way, has the American farmer succeeded in growing an actual lymon, or are they all just spray-painting half a lime yellow? The question and the conspiracy linger.

After the deceiving outer trappings draw you, it hits, lots and lots of bubbles. The bubbles touch you, fill you and play with your emotions. The bubbles speak to you; silent voices that scream their own evil desires to your mind, forcing you to act.

It is documented that many criminals drank a variety of sodas. Al Capone had 3 Dr. Peppers a day. All of the bottles Geraldo Rivera found in Capone's vault were Dr. Pepper bottles. There was a refrigerator in Minnesota full of severed limbs, heads, and lots of Orange Crush belonging to one J. Dahmer, Esq. Of course, the majority of the population just drinks some soda, burps, and goes on with their life. But, if you observe, they are all affected by it in some way, affected and addicted.

I drink a lot of soda. I tried to stop, kick the habit, get those carbonated monkeys off my back, but to no avail. No Kool Aid, water, flavored water, mountain spring water, sparkling water, or imported French water would do. No moo juice, fruit juice, vegetable juice, intoxicating beverage, or ice cream based dessert drink for me. The bubbles had me trapped and floating, ready to do their bidding.

I remembered my first Mt. Dew. I remembered how sweet, cool, and exhilarating it was. I remembered knocking down Bobby Kitkin to steal his silly putty. I remembered a grand campaign of Grape Nehi consumption. I remembered a long career of taking little minnow fish out of the water just to watch them flop and die. I remembered having 6 sprites since I arrived at Denny's. I remembered

seeing the girl and her Jimmy have 5 cokes, 2 Dr. Peppers, and 3 Sprites between them.

-- I believe Senator Carol Moseley-Braun has a gentler look.
Try that bit of dried up egg on the cheeks.

I helped my self to a seat. The girl scooted over toward the A1 quickly.

-- Who the hell are you?

Jimmy asked politely.

-- We don't have time. Actually, we have all the time we want, but that always makes things seem more urgent. I have a plan, and I'm here to help with it.

The girl took a more logical approach,

-- You've been staring at us for a long time. Do you know what we're talking about?

He almost jumped across the table.

-- Shut up! You wanna let everybody in on this?
-- Hey! Jimmy, don't get snatchy with her. I know everything. I know the capital of Vermont, too. Not everyone knows that. Let's cut to the chase. The girl was right. This is the perfect place to rob right now, because no one expects it. Guns would only draw a lot of attention to you, and, frankly, or fredly, the two of you aren't scary enough to pull it off. Let's use our resources.
-- Half the time she can't stop. She just talks about everything. One conversation about nothing after another. If I make one little remark she thinks is too much, she wants to talk about it. She tells me all this stuff I don't want to

know. I try to get her to stop talking, but she won't ...

The girl was growing angry,

-- Jimmy, stop.

He kept going.

-- "Yo, Jimmster, you're talking too much."

-- ...jabbering, yammering, ya-ta-ta-ing like that song. She's just a waling talking talker...

I had to do something, or that place was never going to lose some cash,

-- Jimmy! You're being a sharp cheese.

He just looked confused, or in laymen's terms for non-Jimmyologists, a paradoxically incomplete Jimmy.

-- So she can talk. Jimmy, you can pick locks, I assume?

-- How does she know this shit?

-- She's an interpreter, just follow along or you'll ruin the day-dream.

-- Oh, ok. Yeah, I can.

-- Good. Now, we do it like Dallas.

I drew a diagram across Strom Thurmond. If hes that old and still in Congress, he should retire. I felt no remorse using his face that way.

-- Girl, you will be up here on the grassy knoll, otherwise known as that counter with the cash register on it. Take Jimmy with you. Go act like you want to leave, then talk about the neo-art deco movement going on in the Denny's menu design world, and the curious food motif present.

-- How are we gonna rob the place when we're leaving?

Jimmy was only swimming on the surface of his Coke.

- She's going to have you pick the lock! Where will you be?
- See here, let me move his nose, this is the Schoolbook Depository, otherwise known as the booth I was sitting in. I'll create a big distraction so that everyone will look to me. No one will question why you're by the register. Jimmy will pick the lock and grab the cash real quick. You guys will exit, and we'll meet outside.

The bubbles were moving up his throat, through his nose, and to his brain now.

- I got it. You really think we can do this? It sounds too easy.
- Jimmy, what's easier than assassinating a president in an open car, in broad daylight, and blaming one little communist for it?

No more convincing was required. They were in. We went over everything again. The girl and I figured out my distraction strategy. We were ready to go.

I could feel the little hairs on the back of my neck moving around to the MUSAC sounds of Gloria Estefan. I tried to stay cool; this was no time to Conga. We synchronized our soft drinks, and I returned to my table. Suddenly, the air in Denny's was different. The waitresses looked less mean, the diners were more tolerant, the girl and her Jimmy looked scared. Still, the plan was in motion, no going back.

We gave the nod to each other. The girl and Jimmy went to the register quietly to wait for the Hostess, not cupcake. Those eggs on my plate kept staring up at me. I used my fork to squish them around into the shape of the state of Oregon. The girl looked at me with expectant eyes.

I gave her the nod to perform. Nods are interesting. A nod can mean so many things:

*The grim, uniformed general nodded to the soldier.
For the soldier it was more of a blow than a nod.
He knew that this meant death for the blindfolded
man in front of him. With one short movement
of the neck and head, he had to kill a man.*

*It was the day she had waited a lifetime for.
He was the perfect man for her. She knew that.
He was everything the storybooks told her
to wait for, sweet, charming, handsome, and in love.
He looked to the minister with a question.
The minister nodded back, "You may kiss the bride."
With that nod, he was hers.*

*A bead of sweat dripped down his cheek as he
watched dad read over the letter. He worked hard
to get here. No one thought he could get the grades
to get into a school like this, no one, especially
his father. He didn't want to do anything just to
please his father, but he knew he needed dad's
approval. He couldn't help but jump a little when
his dad looked up from the page and nodded. He could
go.*

If people watched body language more, they might understand each other better. Those nods could mean so much with so little physical effort. Other little movements can convey just as much: a simple salute, the look in my husband's eyes, and a droop in someone's walk, the bird. I could tell something about the woman across the room by the furious way she was stalking toward me.

-- I thought you were going to create a distraction! I've been standing over there for 15 minutes bullshitting about menus

while you sat there and looked at your eggs!

Jimmy felt the need to say *something*. He was nervous. He had seen her this mad before. It would be nice if everyone left with all of their limbs.

-- I'm sorry. I got distracted.

-- Well, you could have got distracted a little louder!

Now, there was a distraction, a natural one, but no one was doing anything with it. The whole place was looking at us to see when she was going to hit me.

The waitress came over to try to settle things

-- What is going on here?

She stopped to look at me.

-- I told you I didn't want to hear from you again!

There was no need to single me out.

-- I don't have time for this. Do you people want to just sit down, shut up, and have dessert?

The anger drifted from the girl's eyes. Jimmy was calm. We all looked at each other with pie in our eyes and sat down. Things always work out better in your head anyway. Jimmy took a sip of Coke.

-- At least she got a waitress over to take our order.

The bubbles tickled his nose.

Kings

By David Elias

I watched his hands, aged eighty years, tap the head of his knight, only to move on over to his wooden pawn. I could almost see each piece bend into a battle stance, preparing to engage in melee with my own small wooden army. His hands, their skin like brittle leaves, confidently alerted his knight it was time as the knight slid into battle with one of my pawns.

I watched as my overmatched pawn fell with one quick swipe of my grandfather's knight's blade. No cry of pain, no gurgles from a bloody throat, no dramatics. My pawn just went silently, obediently. My grandfather looked up at me from underneath his eyebrows, thick with gray, with memories. His stormy eyes rumbled with satisfaction. "Your turn." His voice was strong, young, and thick with the Spanish accent of our family.

My own youthful brow turned downwards, confused. How could I, a boy of fifteen, thwart a wily old general like my grandfather? I looked at the pieces spread out on the checkered battlefield, hoping they would know what to do.

Within minutes, my grandfather's forces had slashed their ways through my ranks. My proud king was reduced to a squabbling coward, watching his wife's demise at the hands of my grandfather's rook. I looked up at my grandfather, bottom lip quivering. "Mercy?" I implored as my king scrambled to a corner of the board.

He shook his head as his forces moved in for the kill. It was over within moments, a blasphemous bishop running my king through. I sighed. My grandfather's sagging cheeks, weighed down by decades of smiles and tears, were pulled up by his incredible smile.

"*Miho*, you came a little closer this time. You almost had me..." He began to retrieve his fallen soldiers to return them to their plush, lavender living quarters on the underside of the board.

I shook my head. "Not even close, *Tata*, not even close." I stared despondently at the clearing battlefield, my army decimated, my king on his back.

That was how I spent every Monday after school.



My grandfather was from Santiago, Chile. He had come to live with us in the States, Monterey Park to be more exact, seven months before my sixteenth birthday. Before that, I had only seen him three times, twice for Christmas and once for my aunt's marriage. He was a pleasant little man, with a body shaped like a potato, peach skin weathered and cracked by the sun, and a proud, balding head. He had a thin crown of platinum hair that he wore gracefully. Every time I would look at my grandfather, I would feel like I was looking at an old, plush chair that was worn in on the seat and armrest. He was soft, warm and comfortable.

He was also the only other living male in the family. That made him a figure of utmost importance, the patriarch of our family. Spanish culture demanded a figurehead, a male figurehead, to keep the family strong. We would all look to him for guidance. He was the king to the modest Madina kingdom. Being the only other male, I was, hypothetically, his heir.

During those six months he spent living with us, my grandfather would make it a chore to spend Monday afternoon playing chess with him. "Chess is the sport of a real gentleman, a true testament of manhood," he would claim before we would begin our miniature war. "It is a battle of the strength of mind, not of body. When you get old like me, you live with that mental strength. You lose that physical strength, but your mind is always there...at least, so you hope."

So it went. Every Monday would entail a lesson and a complete beating of my ego and my poor soldiers who grew fatigued of dying every week. One week, in the middle of February's chilly breath, I stood up from a game, flustered. "This is ridiculous, *Tata*. You know I can't beat you." Once again, my shamed king found himself hiding behind the remnants of his once grand forces, two lowly pawns. I began to walk from the game and towards my room.

"That's too bad," my grandfather said between sips of his tea, "its so hard to be proud of a quitter."

I looked back at him. His gray eyes swirled rapidly with satisfaction. I looked at the board, at my valiant pawns, my shamed king.

Every week, they would courageously march out to battle at my will, fighting till they were overtaken. Did these minute lion-hearted soldiers deserve to be defeated in this manner? Was I to abandon them? I sat back down.

Within minutes, the courage was gone, as were the pawns. My old king, no longer a prideful creature, lay down to rest once again, on the smooth wooden floor of the chess board. "If you are going to go down, do it fighting. There is no pride in quitting." My grandfather stared out at the smoothness of the chessboard. I nudged my lifeless king, and watched him roll along the smoothness.



There would be times where the games of chess weren't so much beatings softened with lessons of life; sometimes they would just be beatings. Good old humbling thrashings.

"You Americans are so arrogant," my grandfather would say. "You Americans need to get reminded that we are all the same sometimes." Sipping his tea, he would proceed to tear straight through my defenses to my helpless king. "You need to take care of your king. His survival is the whole game," he lectured. My grandfather would always remind me that I was an American, to not let people classify me as a "Mexican" boy just because I spoke Spanish and had brown skin. "So many people do that," he would say. "You're not Mexican, you're not Chilean, you're an American. You were born here, like your sister, and that makes you guys Americans. Americans that know a second language."



The weeks would pass. Winter melted into spring, spring became the heat of summer. Monday games would go on. The tea sipping general and his ruthless army continued their conquest over my own overmatched forces. Sometimes, it would seem that I had learned something new, that I had developed a strategy, something that would dethrone his king. Whenever my appointed assassin came

close to his king, he would be found by grandfather's keen eye. "There always has to be a move in response for your opponent's move. When there is no move to respond with, you will lose."

He would quickly dispatch my assassin, his king untouched. I smiled, knowing there was no victory for me "You going to have to beat yourself, *Tata*, that's the only way I'm going to win." The wise general smiled, the lines in his face pulling his dry lips up. "Probably."



It was in the dry heat of a July Monday when it began to happen. I would come home from playing basketball with my friends out at the local park, mental preparing myself for the game I would face with my grandfather. I was ready, my competitive juices flowing. It was time that my grandfather was to be dethroned. It was time I became chess king of the Madina household.

I remember that Monday, running through the wooden fence to our home, into the kitchen, my heart beat a rapid pounding in my chest. I made my way into the dining room and stopped. The dining room table, which was the stage for our battlefield, was devoid of the familiar chessboard. The game would always be prepared when I would arrive. I scanned the room, to see my grandfather lying, peacefully, on an old brown sofa that we had.

He looked even more minute, his potato body resting within the cushions of the sofa. His eyes were closed, his thin eyelids covering the storm underneath. "*Tata*," I called out to him, afraid.

He responded with a loud, echoing snore.

Sleeping. My grandfather was sleeping. How were we supposed to play when he was asleep? I grew tempted to shake him awake, to tell him I was ready to defeat him, ready to take his crown away, to make his king suffer the shame my own suffered at his mottled hands. Wake up, I felt like yelling at him. It's time.

I couldn't yell, or shake him. Frustrated I walked out of the room.



Monday's battles became scarce after that. We played only twice more, because my wily old grandfather had begun to undergo a change. No longer was he a potato, a comforting sofa. He was becoming more of a park bench. His sagging cheeks were pulled up and against his face, like the taut face of a tambourine. The modest crown of platinum hair had lost its luster, and even began falling off in bits and clumps.

Even the stormy gray eyes had grown dull, the intense swirl slowing. His hands, once strong and confident of his moves and in handling his small wooden warriors, now shook. Was it with fear?



I learned, two years later before I graduated, that my grandfather had been going through chemotherapy throughout the six months that he lived with us in our house in Monterey Park. He had been diagnosed down in Chile of stomach cancer, and came to America chasing a chance to beat the disease. The chemotherapy was ineffective.



The last month he spent in the U.S. was lying in some hospital in Burbank. I never went to see him, not once. It was something I did not want to face, an image that I didn't want burned in my mind forever. I wanted to remember my grandfather for what he was, a majestic king, a powerful general, a comforting, plush chair. He deserved that memory of him.

The night he died, my family congregated within my house, crying and laughing, sharing memories, most of which I didn't know. My only memories of him were those afternoon battles. As they reminisced, I quietly set up a chess game.

The tiny soldiers stood proudly in their respective squares. My king stood proud, straight-backed, head held high. As he stared across to the opposing army, he knew, that this time, he would win this battle. The opposing king had lost his general.

It was my time to be king.

COMMON MAN

by Dave Hanson

In our time, I've tried to live
With an earnest heart,
And my hem all unraveled,
I have traveled
The less common way.

Chapter I

They had just ended a song when young Mr. Underhill first met Jen. Chris Sullivan and Ryan and Sarah were sitting at a table with young Mr. Underhill in their favorite pub, The Wig and Pen. There were several empty pint glasses in front of them and Ryan, a short, brown haired American, was leading the group in song.

*O, I'm tired and I wanna go to bed
(ba dum dum)
I came and did exactly what I said
(ba dum dum)
I had a little drink about an hour ago,
And it went straight to my head!*

*O! I'm tired and I wanna go to bed!
(BA DUM DUM!)
I came and did exactly what I said!
(BA DUM DUM!)
I had a little drink about an hour ago,
And it went straight to me head!*

And then they laughed and drank some more. They were almost drunk. One more Guinness and it would have done them all in. Lucy approached the merry group to a chorus of cheers. She looked around, unembarrassed and signaled her friend to approach. Sandy blond hair, big brown eyes and a smile like a sunrise was how young Mr. Underhill saw Jen. She sat with Lucy, across the large wooden table from the group. The bar was behind them and the other locals stayed away from the rowdy table of soldiers and British girls. Soon Lucy and Jen got up to get some drinks and Chris Sullivan, a large Irish American, leaned over young Mr. Underhill and said Jen was Crackers. Young Mr. Underhill of course new that Chris Sullivan meant the English term and he agreed by slamming his pint glass against Chris Sullivan's, causing a back splash to land on the already wet, wooden table. Young Mr. Underhill never took his eyes off Jen.

When Lucy and Jen returned they all shared some drinks, songs and another round of stories. By this time they were all pissed. Sarah offered to move the group back to her house on High Street, which was a few blocks away, past the old college buildings and the Oxford bell tower. There they could drink some wine and smoke cigars she had at home. The pub was closing anyway. They finished their drinks and made their way out of the pub, bidding a goodnight to the bartender and a few of the friendlier locals.

The group of friends stumbled down the cobble stone road, singing to the black cabbies as they passed them by. Ryan and Sarah and Chris Sullivan walked ahead while young Mr. Underhill listened to Lucy and Jen talking. That was the first night young Mr. Underhill met Jen.

The stony ground around his cave was already warm and pleasant to the touch, Ghali discovered, as he entered the light of day from the darkness of his dwelling. "Yhaaaaaaah!" A loud yawn burst through his mouth as he stretched his body, letting his muscles know that the day was starting, the sun warming his broad, hairy back. Ghali squatted by the entrance of his cave, which was of a fair size for someone his age and single. Life was good. He was young, the day was young and the earth was young. In fact one of its first springs was just getting under way. Three shapes passed below him on the trail that ran past his dwelling. Another male, his mate and their child out for a morning stroll. The child, who had climbed onto the mother's back, wrapped his arms around her neck for security as they hobbled over the rough, rocky terrain.

"Ungah Dungah!" Ghali shouted suddenly. The male and female turned, squinted to see who had said hello.

"Ahh, Ungah Dungah!" the male shouted back joyfully. Both male and female raised a long, hairy arm in greeting. The youngster looked at Ghali in suspicion, his eyes wide with curiosity. Ghali smiled and gave a little wave with his fingers at the child. The child laughed and quickly buried his head into his mother's fur. *Ungah Dungah Ungah*, Ghali thought. It was a good morning.

He crouched on the mound in front of his cave for awhile, just enjoying the clear day. Not a cloud in the sky. High above a small bird circled in the air. It glided in a few circles, gracefully before suddenly being swallowed up by a large Teradactile.

“Ungah! Ha ha ha!” Ghali laughed heartily. The bird hadn’t seen it coming. Suddenly his thoughts turned back to that family, now disappearing over the hills. As much as he enjoyed his single life, there was something missing. Sometimes, late at night, in the wee hours of the morning, his cave felt lonely to him. Usually by daylight that feeling had gone away, defeated by the sun. But something about that child. He wanted to take him in his strong, hairy arms and protect him. And the way the male looked at his female and she at her male. Ung, there certainly was something missing from Ghali’s life.

A sound came from behind him. Ghali stood up and was quickly knocked down by another body. The two forms tumbled down Ghali’s mound and onto the dusty trail in front. The bodies untangled, Ghali quickly distancing himself from the dangerous creature.

“Ungah Dungah Ungah!” Ghali demanded angrily.

“Ungah Dungah.” was its reply. There sitting on the ground, looking up at Ghali sat Regah. A dopey grin could be seen peeking through his shaggy hair that hung over his face, hiding his eyes. Regah was Ghali’s best friend. They had grown up together. Although they were the same age, Regah still lived with his parents about two caves down from Ghali. He was fun loving and daring. Always a practical joker, he acted like a he was still a cub and thus, Regah carried little responsibility with him. To be honest, he enjoyed living at home. He didn’t have to hunt for his own food. He took some primordial frowns from his parents, but it was worth it. He had no cares and no worries. To no big surprise, Regah didn’t have a mate either.

After Ghali vindicated the attack with a swift pounding of Regah’s shoulder, they took a walk together out into the woods. They did this every day, looking for berries to snack on, eventually ending up at their favorite watering hole for a refreshing swim and cool drink.

“Ungah Dungah Ungah.” Ghali said, expressing his recent feel-

ings of discontent.

“Ahhhhh, Ungah Ungah DungahDungah!” Regah joked, and thus receiving another swift punch to his shoulder that knocked him off balance. Although they were the same age, Ghali was a good foot taller than Regah and more than doubled him in muscle. Regah just never seemed to evolve out of his pre-pubescent years, which explained his immature attitudes about life, Ghali always thought.

The roar of some animal could be heard through the forest. Ghali and Regah hardly noticed. The ways of the animals was not their business unless they were hungry. The forest was in full bloom. Flowers and leaves of all shapes and colors opened up to the warm, spring sun dancing in the gentle breeze that cascaded through the forest, creating a melodic rustling among the leaves.

“Ungah Dungah Ungah Dungah!” Ghali continued. There was a desperation, a sadness in his voice.

“Ungah, Ghali. Ungah Dungah Ungah. Dungah Dungah.” Regah assured. He would find his mate some day. It was the way of the earth. It happened to everyone, especially at spring time. They were quiet for a time, walking slowly through a berry patch, occasionally nibbling on a red or black morsel. Finally they came to their watering hole.

Something seemed different to Ghali. There was something in the air, a certain smell that was sweet and soft. Regah didn't notice as usual and quickly made his way to the uppermost outcropping of rock. It was one of their favorite jumping places, although often the height had scared both of them into not swimming some days. It was there that Ghali saw what he had smelled in the air. He was surprised he hadn't heard the noise.

“Regah!” Ghali shouted an urgent whisper. “Ungah Ungah! Ungah Ungah!” He pointed to the water. There in the water were two females, laughing and playing. Slowly the two males crept to the cliff edge and looked down. What were two females doing in their watering hole?! Ghali stood up suddenly, angry. His strong form could now easily be seen by any who sensed his presence.

“Raghahhhh!” he shouted, beating his chest. He would let these two females know that this was his watering hole, not theirs.

The two females looked up at him quickly. One, a short, dumpy female quickly ran out of the water and into the woods. But the other, who appeared to be taller, a little rounder in some places and yet slender in others, stayed. Her eyes met Ghali's. His shout stopped short. He was frightened for a moment. His mouth was dry and he couldn't swallow suddenly. *Ungah Dungah!* he thought to himself. Frightened of a female? How ridiculous. It was then that he felt Regah's shoulder slam into his back.

"AahhaaaHaaaaaagh!" he yelled as he crashed into the water. He surfaced with a gasp, his long, wet, hair covering his face so he couldn't see. The water was shockingly cold this morning. With his fingers he parted the strands to find himself face to face with the female. He couldn't escape her gaze. Her brown eyes dove into his. He was trembling. He gave a hard swallow. She moved closer, her nose almost touching his cheek. Instinctively, he moved his head back a few inches. She gave him a gentle sniff, looked into his eyes, smiled and then quickly dove under the water. Ghali looked up at the cliff that only seconds earlier he was shouting from. There stood Regah, smiling. In fact he was laughing at him! Regah pointed towards the shore. Ghali looked to find the female had resurfaced and was climbing out of the water towards the shore. The water slid off her body in a thousand drops. Her moist skin glinted in the sun light as she moved onto the shore. She gave a look over her shoulder back at Ghali. For a moment there was a vulnerability in her eyes, but it quickly disappeared. It was replaced by a shy giggle joined with a pointing finger. The finger was pointed at Ghali. Ghali looked down and realized he was standing upright out of the cold water. Ghali sat down quickly.

"Ungah dungah, dungah...dungah..." he trailed off embarrassed. And in all honesty, the water was really cold. With a sly smile from the corner of her mouth, she disappeared into the forest.

Ghali blinked. "Ungah Dungah Dungah?" he said to himself, confused. He didn't know what to do. He looked up to Regah for help. Regah sat there still grinning like a monkey. He pointed again and then urgently motioned with his hands for Ghali to follow her. Ghali looked back and swallowed hard once more. Moving his legs

slowly, he made his way out of the water towards the shore. Ghali gave one uncertain glance back to his friend, as if asking, *Dungah Dungah?* But he knew why he was doing this. She reappeared at the forest entrance, waiting.

Ghali found his walk with the female frustrating. Again and again his instincts told him to impress her. So, he tried picking up a stick and slamming it against a tree with great G force, splitting the stick into little pieces. She ignored him and walked ahead without a glance. Ghali was bewildered. He had seen other males do this for females and they all seemed very impressed with the show of strength. Ghali thought for a moment. *Ungah Ungah? What to do?* And then another idea came to his head. He quickly ran up to her and picked her up from behind, raising her above his head.

"Yahhhhgreaahhhh!" he yelled in triumph! She gave a startled yelp, and quickly dropped her elbow into his eye. With a cry of pain he dropped her and clutched his face. Dumbfounded, he saw that she was glaring at him. That she had indeed hit him on purpose! With an angry look, she stormed off ahead of him. Ghali was at a loss. What kind of female wasn't impressed with a daring show of strength? This is what his father always told him to do. In fact that was the very move that made Ghali's mother his father's mate. And then he saw something. They were back at the berry patch that he and Regah and come through, headed towards the cave dwellings. Ghali moved quickly to one of the richest berry bushes. Grabbing it from its trunk, Ghali gave a great pull and yanked the entire berry bush out of the ground, roots and all. He quickly caught up to the female, smiled bashfully and presented the red berry bush to her. And there it was, that smile. The smile that ruined a thousand berries. It was back and his world was in order again. He felt peace come to his body once more even though his heart was beating faster than ever. She took the berry bush and gave him a gentle sniff by his ear and a bump from her nose. Ghali was thrilled. His body was on fire. He looked at her and returned the sniff and then gently blew on her neck. She smiled and took several berries from the bush and handed them to Ghali.

They made their way back to his cave. It was dusk, the cold

and dark were setting in. With a proud strut Ghali showed her the inside of his cave. She hesitated.

“Ungah. Ungah Dungah?” she asked, worried.

“Dungah. Dungah!” he assured her. Of course he would respect her in the morning.

She entered with a smile. It was dark and cold, but suddenly a bright light appeared in the center of the cave, as if the sun had set only to reappear in the middle of Ghali’s dwelling. Fire, the latest in cave warming and lighting technology. The female was impressed. None of the other young males had fire in their caves. Not that she had seen the inside of their caves, it’s just what the other females had told her. Ghali showed her to his pile of fur skins. With a sniff to her neck, he embraced her and she him. Outside the roar of some great beast echoed through the night, but Ghali and his mate didn’t pay it much heed.

It had been two weeks since that fateful day at the watering hole. The morning found Ghali crouched on his mound as usual. There was a look of distress on his face. He glanced back at his dwelling. He hadn’t really expected her to move in. Sure, she would come over some nights. They would hang out, sit by the fire. Maybe even invite some friends over. Friends. Ghali had seen Regah only twice since that day and both times it was in passing on his way to get food for his mate. He gave another glance back at his dwelling, letting a long sigh escape from his mouth.

“Ungah Dungah Ungah Dungah!” he complained to himself. Now she was cleaning up the place, moving rocks and rugs around. Reorganizing the fire pit. And what the dungah was that flowery smell that flowed out of his cave like a fog?! It was awful!

“Dungah?” Ghali mumbled disconcertingly. What was he doing? He was a young homoerectus for crying our loud! *Dungah Dunghah!* The world was his Jurassic egg, as the saying went. And now he had to provide for this female, coming and going on her permission.

“Ghali!” a shout came from the cave. He swiveled around and found her staring at him. Their eyes met. She turned, looked over her shoulder, smiled seductively and disappeared back into their cave

with a toss of her long brown hair. Ghali let out a deep and pleasant breath. *Ungah Dungah!* Yes, she was worth it. And with that thought, he quickly made his way into their cave, happy and satisfied.

Chapter II

My hands were shaking when I arrived at her door. #7 Crescent Canyon Rd. I pushed the buzzer and the taxi waited for the door to open before he had left. He was a nice, simple, man who joked with me on the way over.

I was fairly mulled when big gay Andy decided I should go over and see her. He had just told me that she fancied me very much. That she had a special place in her heart for me. He was good friends with her. A friendship I was jealous of and resented, even though I knew he was gay. Big gay Andy took charge and the drink gave me what remaining courage I needed.

We rushed down the streets of Oxford, grabbing flowers of every color from their beds outside the restaurants and cafés along High Street. A late night liquor store supplied us with wine. Big gay Andy selected white wine. When I asked why white and not red, Andy replied quite quickly, "Red wine will let her know you want sex. You don't want sex tonight. You want company and conversation."

"Oh," I replied, confused and a little disappointed.

He paid for the wine and I followed him out of the store. Andy shouted for a taxi and one stopped. As I crawled in, Andy gave me a pat on the back and closed the door. A bouquet in one hand, a bottle of white in the other, on my way to visit a woman in her flat. I was so nervous I left a collection of puddles on the cab floor from my shaking and wringing hands. Yesterday, I was sure she hated me. Yesterday, I thought maybe Big Gay Andy was really straight. Yesterday, I was jealous. Tonight, I was just nervous.

When she opened the door and smiled knowingly the taxi left and I had courage. We drank until we were giddy. We talked about our lives. And against Big Gay Andy's advice, we made love until dawn in her small flat at # 7 Crescent Canyon Road.

The next morning as I walked back, a certain bounce in my step, I passed a café. The flowers were missing from the flower bed. Andy was inside and gave me a wave. I ordered tea, cream and two sugars and I sat down next to him.

"How was it?" he asked, a smile across his big face.

The morning air was already warm with summer's heat when Ghali walked out of his hut. It was going to be a hot day, that he could feel as the sun heated his bare, tanned back. Standing up, he stretched out his back letting out a loud, "Ohhhh! Ohh! Oooooo..."

Relaxing back into a comfortable position, he squatted by his fire hole and began to stoke the smoldering wood from last night's fire. Soon, a medium blaze was crackling again and the smell of burning wood filled the warm air around him. Life was different now, different from the old days. It had been ages since he had met his mate, Sopha, at the old watering hole. Many seasons ago he had presented her to the Shaman, who performed a quick dance around a fire, throwing seeds and berries at the two of them, as was custom in their tribe.

After that they had moved into the new hut. It was larger than Ghali's old dwelling and there was room for expansion. It was also outside the hubub of the central council fire and trading grounds that his old dwelling was near. Now they were surrounded by other expandable, easy made huts, owned by other newly mated males and females. Out here the air was fresher, the watering holes were filled with small ones and the lonely feeling never came.

He saw less of Regah, as his old friend still lived near the council fire. But on occasion Regah would visit and stay late into the night, much to Sopha's annoyance. Ghali laughed at the thought. He remembered the time when Regah came over and nearly collapsed the hut telling a story of how he had speared a mammoth all by himself, having to wrestle with it to get his lucky spear back from deep within its heart. It wasn't true, for Ghali had heard the story earlier that week from some of the other hunters. Regah never even threw his lucky spear, he was afraid it would break. The other hunt-

ers killed the mammoth and when it was all over Regah stuck his spear into its side, claiming the kill. But Ghali had to admit Regah's version was very exciting and well enacted, as the result nearly ruined their home, though it cost Ghali a night outside by the fire as Sopha went to her furs very angry.

It was at this time a familiar shadow fell across Ghali's body, blocking the summer sun for a moment. Ghali moved to his right quickly as a body flew past him, catching its underside by the now large cooking fire.

"Yea!" Regah shouted in shock and pain as he crashed into the dirt on the other side of the fire.

"You slower. Me faster now," Ghali snorted as he returned to his original spot by the fire.

"Uhg," Regah agreed. "Ghali well?"

"Ya. Me not bad. Regah well?"

"Ya. Me do well," Regah moved next to Ghali near the fire. Ghali produced two pieces of meat from his side pouch and laid them down on the hot firepit rocks that surround the scourged earth. The meat sizzled.

"How Sopha?" Regah asked. "She still not like Regah."

"She not happy," Ghali said smiling. "She not like Regah. She not like Ghali."

The two friends laughed at this and began discussing matters that were important to them. The hunting season had begun and the tribe had made good kills. Ghali didn't hunt quite as much as he used to. He now gathered with some of the other mated males in the fields behind the new hut grouping. He still went out with the tribe hunters as he was still respected for his skills, but mated males had more responsibilities than the younger males who lived around the council fire and trading grounds.

They spent the morning discussing the trade with other tribes and hunting legends and rumors of the land. Sopha had awoken not long after Regah had tried to surprise Ghali. She was inside attending the young and kept out of Ghali's way. She grew tired of Regah's irresponsible ways and was uncomfortable when he and Ghali would discuss old times. But she was glad of Ghali's happiness when he

saw his old friend. And after all it was Regah who pushed Ghali into the water that day they met.

Sopha had come from a small family that was excited when Ghali chose her as his mate. They had hoped it would calm Sopha's spirit a little so that she might become the mate she was supposed to. But Sopha, although happy with her life, longed for more. She felt lonely caring for their young while Ghali gathered in the fields or hunted with the other men. She was Ghali's mate Sopha. A name he chose for her, for females are named by their mates and referred to as that name only. She was the mother of three young now, and her life and name called for certain responsibilities. After she had woken their children, two males and one female, she sent them about the hut cleaning and working. As soon as Regah and Ghali were done visiting and Ghali's meat was cooked, the family would eat together before they departed for the day.

"A gathering at water hole. All the hunters go," Regah told Ghali.

"When?" Ghali asked, interested at the prospect of visiting with the males from the old dwelling.

"Later, when bright circle in dark sky," Regha informed him. Tonight there would be a party at the old watering hole. "You come?"

"Ya. Sopha no like, but me male. Me go." Ghali's deep brow furrowed as he remembered he was supposed to be in charge, and could do as he pleased.

At this time the three young came charging out of the hut and tackled Ghali. Regah noticed Ghali did not move very fast to avoid the charge of giggling young. The two males had grown quite a bit in the short time since they were born. The youngest, a female, always seemed to be five paces behind her rough and tumble brothers. They all shared Ghali's brown hair and well built body, while keeping Sopha's slender face and pretty eyes. They were strong and full of life, as Regah saw it. He was suddenly aware of a certain lonely feeling that had been plaguing him lately. He wasn't brave enough to speak it out loud, but it was a similar pain that Ghali had known some time ago. But that was another time.

The day went as one would expect. The day was hot. The two youngest played around the local water pit with the other young. The

mothers of the young tended to the huts on one side of the pit while most of the fathers tended the berry and fruit fields on the other side. Both keeping eyes on the young at play. Ghali's oldest young was with him, gathering berries. He was not of age to hunt yet but was plenty old enough to accompany Ghali in the gathering and harvesting of the local fields. His name was Athen.

"Holymale came to hut," Athen said suddenly. They had been working in silence for hours, concentrating on the berry patches they were gathering from.

"What he want?" Ghali asked.

"He talk Ma," he replied. Ghali grunted in response and decided to save it until later to discuss with Sopha. As the sun began to set, the workers began to return home, dumping that day's harvest into a collective pile that would be taken to the council fire to be divided among the whole tribe. The same was done with the kills of every hunting group. Each day the head female of every dwelling would gather near the council fires and receive their family's food for the following day.

Ghali and Athen returned home to find Sopha had gone indeed gone to the council fire and was preparing that days final meal, meat and berries and hard shelled fruit. After they had eaten, the young crawled into their furs and slept soundly. Ghali and Sopha moved outside to the fire pit and sat next to each other.

While the summer day was hot, the night had a chill to it as if to remind the earth of the difference from it's sunny counterpart. The night fire crackled and leapt into the air, a moving orange glow stretched out around it, bouncing off the walls of the family hut.

"Ghali go out," Ghali said, staring into the fire.

"Regah," Sopha said as she sat up away from her mate. "Ghali go out with Regah."

"Yes," Ghali answered quickly. He decided now was not a good time to lie. "Hunters gather at watering hole."

"I no like," Sopha said. "Ghali not go out. Not leave mate. Not leave young. Other hunters. Other females."

"No. Ghali be with friends. Old friends. No get to see. Home with mate. Home with young. All night."

Sopha looked at him, looked at fire and gave up. "Ghali male. Ghali do what Ghali want."

Ghali could see that something was bothering her. Something more than the gathering at the watering hole. But Ghali was afraid. Better to pretend that nothing was wrong to him than to discuss what was bothering Sopha, he decided.

"Holymale came." Change subject, Ghali decided. Sopha looked at him. "Athen told me.

"Holymale come and talk Sopha," Sopha leaned into Ghali again.

"What Holymale want?"

"Holymale want Sopha to be fire starter for council fire." It was a high honor. Only few females were selected to be fire starters. It was a position of wisdom and respect. Ghali was not sure how he felt about it. He wanted to be happy for Sopha. It was indeed an honor and his family would be proud Sopha. But it meant change. He would still be needed in the hunt and would spend the rest of his time in the fields, gathering. Sopha would be trained and presented to the council. She would be involved in council ceremony and Elder meetings. Ghali would stay and watch the young.

He got up suddenly and started to walk towards the house.

"Where Ghali go?" Sopha asked. She was standing too.

"Ghali go where Ghali want. Ghali go watering hole. Ghali male."

"Holymale say Sopha fire starter. Sopha fire starter. Ghali not change that. Sopha's young not change that. Only Sopha change that."

Ghali went into the hut, pet the young ones, gathered his spear and furs and left. On the way he stopped and met Sopha's gaze. It was that same gaze he met at the watering hole a long time ago. The same watering hole he was going to now.

Ghali left and Sopha stayed up for a while to tend the night fire. As Ghali left, Athen watched from the fur covered window of the hut. He laid his head back down and cuddled his brother and sister closer to his breast. They had all been listening, as young always do.

Chapter III

The cherry of his cigarette glowed white under the red light of the plane's cabin. The cigarette trembled nervously between his lips. Young Pfc. Underhill stood up with the rest of the soldiers. The plane shook violently and Underhill lost his footing, falling into the soldier in front of him. He regained his footing and apologized to the soldier, but he never heard it over the low, drown of the plane and the boom of incoming flack. They were all standing, about to leap out of the plane into occupied France, land safely and accomplish their missions. Theirs is not to question why, Theirs is but to do and die, as the old Light Brigade had said. Underhill didn't feel like the Light Brigade.

Underhill had had a wonderful time in Oxford. He and his outfit were moved to Oxford from London, as London had become too crowded due to the invasion. Underhill enjoyed himself immensely and had made friends with some guys from other companies. He didn't really care much for the men in his own, never seemed to get a long with them. During the weeks of nothing to do but wait, Underhill had seen everything there was to see and drank everything there was to drink. He wasn't a big drinker, or at least hadn't been before the army, but he figured what the hell. When was the next time he would be young, about to die and in Oxford? He had met a girl. They laughed and made love trying not to discuss anything serious. She was an actress and young Mr. Underhill (as he was known during those days) found this exciting, much more exciting than being a soldier in the US Army, which is what the young actress had found exciting about him. He wasn't sure if he would live so he had told her not to wait and he thanked her for being the first love of his life, possibly his last. She cried. They kissed. And young Pfc. Underhill found himself on a plane with a lit cigarette in his mouth.

The red light changed to green and then to darkness and the cold wind came rushing into the plane. The line began to move and Underhill began to think. He would be different after this. In a very real and a very sad way Underhill would die in a moment. Die to be reborn into something different. Something savage, something sub-

human. Because that is what he would have to be to survive. He said goodbye to himself and jumped out the door.

He was reborn. Like a helpless infant, Underhill floated down. He saw death and fire. Pain and fear. He heard men scream and saw men fall. He saw those he knew in a former life glow as bright as a star and fade into nothing. He felt a strong force push him. That was followed by a loud boom. He looked up to see the mother that had borne him into this world streak like a comet across the sky, her ignited engines leaving a lighted trail behind her. So long mother, Underhill thought. I will have to grow up on my own.

He landed in his new, dark world and tried to decide on how to survive in such a place.

Ghali arrived at the Old Watering Hole around eight o'clock. It was cold, the autumn wind had a mad chill that night. He and Regah had taken Regah's old truck and Ghali was not in the best of moods. He must be having trouble at home, Regah decided. At least they would be out with the other guys, drinking and laughing. Perhaps he would forget his problems for a while.

Inside the smoky bar came the sounds of billiards and laughter combined with the smells of beer and cheap perfume, dancing to the rhythm of reminiscent Rock and Roll, reminding all who could remember of their glory days. Ghali and Regah headed straight for the bar, ordered a drink and looked around. It did not take long for the two friends to be waved down by the guys hanging around the billiards table.

Through the noisy smoke Regah could see Dab, Teedah, Creess and Allob. There were a few women around them that were locals that Ghali and Regah also knew well. The guys, as they were known, urged Regah and Ghali to come over.

"In a few minutes," Regah shouted, holding up five fingers. Ghali had kept his attention to his beer, which he was drinking from a pint glass.

"How are things?" Regah asked.

"Oh, not well, pal. Not well at all."

"I heard you had to take out another mortgage."

"How'd you hear about that?"

"Creess told me."

"None of his business, damn nosy Crees. Always thinks he knows something. Like he's got something on you and he's holding it over your head. Damn nosy Creess," Ghali said, flicking a beer nut over the bar.

Creess lived just outside the farming district of their community, not too far from Ghali and was practically a neighbor. He worked with the district council board as a council member's assistant, like Ghali's wife. He had a habit of looking out for people. Ghali was sore at Creess for a snide remark he made the other day when they ran into each other in town.

"Yeah, I had to take out another one," Ghali continued. "That's three total, you know." He took a drink.

"Yeah, I know."

Regah took a long drink with Ghali, setting their pints down together.

"I thought harvest was good this year. Wasn't it a good harvest?" Regah asked.

"It doesn't matter much anymore. Good, bad, the trade embargo and industries take all the profit and the goods."

Ghali turned around, pints in hand, leaning his elbows against the bar.

"If we would just stop exporting everything we make. I mean, we buy back our own goods and... ah, you know all this already."

"What about the council or the representatives. Have you tried talking to them? I mean your wife works for the council, surely she can do something."

"Nah, I already tried and with the trouble me and Sopha've been having it's just not looking good."

"Man, that's got to be hard. All those late nights with the kids. And her doing so well at her job." A long pause. They both took long swigs of their drinks.

"Yeah, it's tough. I hate it, in fact. She makes more than me and that ain't right. But we need the job. I mean the council gives

benefits. Without that job the youngest can't have the doctors appointments and all that jazz."

"Is it certain?"

"The doc says it's pretty certain. Something like ninety percent."

Ghali finished his beer, setting the pint down on the bar behind him for a refill. He cradled his head in his arms, running his hands through his hair.

"And so fucking rare too! Like, one out of every five hundred thousand or something."

The bartender brought the refill and Ghali drank it, leaving the tab and a tip on the table. Standing up straight, his work shirt and pants stained with dirt, Ghali looked at his friends.

"What's with all the questions anyway, pal? Come on, lets go play some pool and hang out with the guys."

The two left the bar and wandered over to where the guys were playing pool. His troubles forgotten for a moment, a big smile crossed Ghali's face and he looked like his old self again as he clutched a pool stick and hoped around the billiards table, intent on his game.

An hour later the door to the watering hole opened up. Along with a cold gust of air were three females. The patrons of the bar turned at the atmospheric change, acknowledged the new arrivals and turned back to their respective activities. All except one. Ghali's smile was a thing of the past and his face held a grim secret while his eyes were like glaciers.

One female stopped and met the frozen gaze. She smiled and followed her friends to the bar. Her name was Ava. She was sort of pretty. Her looks were leaving her and she knew it. She carried herself as if she was still young. Her hair was now dyed to keep the gray away from the once lush, thick, black hair. She was curvy, but her curves were wider now with her age. She could still turn heads though and her face was still something of a fantasy.

"Here," Ghali said, handing his stick to Regah. "I gotta take care of something." Ghali stepped up to the bar between Ava and her friends. Creess, Regah, Dab, Teedah and Allob watched carefully, Creess making eye contact with everyone as if to say, I told you so.

"Knock that goddamn look off your face or I'll knock it off for you." Regah said into Creess' ear.

"What?" Creess asked defensively.

"You know what," Regah was right up in his face now. "Lay off of him. I know you know. We all know or at least have guessed what's been going on with Ghali."

The others were listening with their eyes diverted. Regah was quietly backing Creess around the pool table, trying to grab as little attention from the rest of the bar as possible.

"Hey, it ain't me he should be worrying about." Creess said as he bumped his back against the wall behind the pool table.

"He's in enough trouble without you. Just remember, if it turns out you did do anything, that's a really large man you've pissed off." Regah finished with a shove and walked away from Creess. At this same time Ghali said something into Ava's face and angrily turned towards the door.

"Say hi to your wife for me, Ghali." Ava shouted as Ghali opened the door. He left slamming it behind him. Regah looked around at the others, everyone had watched the confrontation, and then he slammed his stick onto the table.

"Damn it."

Chapter IV

I wake up and I am tight inside. I cramp like a woman. I am waking from a nightmare that I visit every night. It is night time and I am quickly marching with my squad down a path. There are tall, French hedges on either side and we can't see a thing due to all the fog. We are on the double quick and in single file, with myself one man away from the rear. Up ahead there is a disturbance. And we get quiet. More quiet than we were before, but we keep moving. There is another squad coming towards us only they don't look like us. Their uniforms are gray and their helmets are long. They are the Germans. We pass each other. They are in single file, at the double quick.

We just stare at each other as we go by. No one says anything, no one raises a weapon or alarm. We just pass by, like in a dream. I look closely at their faces as they are doing to me. I see young faces. I see thin bodies. I see hatred and confusion. I see fear. I see me. I pass myself. I am the second from the rear in the German line.

I look at me and me looks at I. On one arm I wear a Swastika and on the other I wear an American flag. My German self waves as we pass but I don't wave back. I turn back and look down the road but I hear something behind me. I turn around. The Germans are facing us and are raising their guns. They are no longer young and scared. They are just hate. I try to yell to my squad but they already know. We turn and raise our guns. On the other side the Germans start to fire and we fire back. I see myself shooting at myself. Soon all are dead except me and I don't know which. All I know is that I am afraid and alone.

I wake up afraid and alone. All day I am afraid and alone and no one knows why. I don't know why. I come home go to bed. I am afraid and alone.

After I was wounded I went back to Oxford and lived with her. The building seemed old and falling apart. They lost their luster or maybe I did. The loud cars on the cobble stone made me jump and I got a fright every time something moved by me fast. Nowadays it seemed everything was moving fast. The old gang wasn't around anymore. Ryan and Chris Sullivan were dead. Big Gay Andy had been arrested as a conscientious-objector. Sarah and Lucy were around but didn't want to see me and I didn't want to see them either.

Jen tried to excite me but nothing worked. She was acting but I didn't care anymore. I wasn't a soldier anymore and couldn't understand why she was excited by me. I don't think she really was. She would talk of love and say words of love but that didn't make any sense to me. Nothing did. She would try and comfort me from my nightmare. She would put her hands on me when I woke screaming and sweating.

I left her. I told her I was no good anymore. I wasn't the same

me. That I died over there and none of this was real. She didn't understand. I didn't understand. I just new I was afraid and alone.

I moved back to the States. I moved into an apartment, next door to some college kids. Eventually I married a woman and had some children. I don't know who they are though and they don't know who I am. It's not fair but nothing is. I died long ago. The dead are afraid and alone and they don't know why. No one does.

It was during the first snow when Sopha and Ghali broke the news to the kids. It did not go well. There were few explosions or eruptions of anger. Ghali was in a state of shock and degeneration, it seemed. He just sat there, his eyes sunk deep under his brow, like they were hiding from something. He was worried and hadn't slept.

Sopha did all the speaking.

"We've decided to separate, kids," she had said. "But we want you to know it's not your fault. It is something that just happens to adults." No one blinked. No one breathed, it seemed. It is shocking for children to see their parents fall. To see their models, their trusted guardians, their perfect heroes become not so perfect. To see a weakness and a fault in what you are supposed to be when you grow up.

"Your father will be moving out. It is not permanent," she continued. "We are just trying to take a break from one another. Trying to work things out." No response.

"It's for the best. Your father and I feel it is for the best for the family."

"What family?" It was Athen. He had been waiting. The other two just sat there. They didn't say much in the adult world. But neither did Ghali, so it seemed.

"We stopped being a family a long time ago. We know it's not our fault. We know it is your fault." His eyes were shiny but he wasn't going to let anyone see that. He grabbed the other two and left the room. Athen had a new role to play. A role he had been playing for some time now. A role he shouldn't have to play.

None of what Sopha had said was really true. They weren't

just separating. They were divorcing. She had told Ghali that she hadn't been in love with him for over a year. When he asked if it had been the affair because that had meant nothing to him, she said no. That had just been the final clue that it wasn't working.

"It's you," she said. "You don't want to be a family. You want to be alone, like your friend Regah." Ghali stopped talking. He just mumbled and grumbled to himself as if his thoughts couldn't reach his mouth.

"And I tried. I tried so hard but you wouldn't help. It isn't fair. It's not fair to me to keep me trapped in here. I'm more than Sopha. I'm more than your mate."

"Sopha," Ghali grumbled and reached out to her.

"No," she said, stepping back. "Don't call me that. That's not even my name. It's your name. It's a name you gave me. I don't have a name."

She was quiet for a moment. She started to cry. Ghali looked away, at the floor, at the ground, anywhere but at her. He didn't understand what was happening. He didn't feel he had done anything wrong. He had just done what was natural, he thought. It was all beyond him.

"And that's why I need to get away from you. I need to find my own name. I love my job, you don't. I like being someone other than Ghali's mate or Ghali's woman or Ghali's wife. I'm tired of pretending and lying to our children, who know what's going on better than we do anyway."

Ghali scratched his head for a minute and then slammed his hand through the wall. He pulled it out and walked to the other side of the room. The female jumped and for a moment thought he would do something savage to her. But he didn't. Ghali was afraid and scared.

"We should tell the kids. After we do I'm leaving. I'm taking them with me for the time being. I'm moving in with my parents. You can reach me at the council if you want to visit with them. At least until we get something official saying what is to be done with this whole mess." She wiped her eyes and called the children into the room.

After they told the children the female packed her things that she needed. She talked with the young, calming them down. It was all very sad. She packed their things and they all left. Athen didn't say a word to his father or his mother. The youngest was so quiet one would think she didn't know what was really happening. The middle one came to his father. Ghali just sat on the floor. He was staring straight ahead. He looked at his second son without recognition. The middle one tried to find his father, somewhere in those deep eyes. But he couldn't. He didn't want to leave, he wanted to stay with his father. Why did mother get to keep him? He looked again for his father, asking, pleading with him to do something, to stop this madness. But he couldn't find his father. It was like looking at a distant ancestor you read about but didn't know. The middle one got angry. He left with his brother and sister.

The hut was sold. The field, absorbed into the community. Ghali moved into a cave, much like his first dwelling. Only this one was different. It was not near the council fire and trading grounds. It was a cave far away, where no one would pass by. When he got up and faced that lonely feeling, no friendly family with young cubs were to be seen.

His old female had moved away. She remarried into another tribe and was doing well from what his children told him. Ghali made up with them over time. They accepted what had happened and even forgave him. He saw them when they came to visit but other than that he did not know where they were or where they went. On occasion Ghali would travel to the old watering hole, he would see old friends but it was always uncomfortable. He didn't seem to be of their world anymore and it always reminded him of what he once was, of what he once had. No, it was better to start over.

Epilogue

Old Mr. Underhill walked into a bar one afternoon. He liked these places. If there was anything in this strange world old Mr. Underhill liked, it was a good watering hole. At least that's what he

always said. This one seemed much to his liking. It reminded him of pleasant times and pleasant memories. At the bar he ordered a pint of Guinness. The bartender filled his order and old Mr. Underhill took a long sip, trying not to get too much head from the dark, smooth stout.

Sitting next to him, old Mr. Underhill discovered, was a man crouched over his drink. His long shaggy hair hung down over his shoulders and partially obscured his face. Underhill could see a large brow with deep set eyes. He was drinking a beer from a stein.

"Hello," old Mr. Underhill said to the man.

"Hmm," was all he said back.

For a while neither said anything. They just stared straight ahead at their reflections in the bar mirror, behind all the bottles of whiskey and scotch. After a long pull of his Guinness, old Mr. Underhill said, quietly, almost to himself, " You ever come into a place and it just reminds you of somewhere else? But you can't quite place where or when. Almost like it was another life or someone else's?"

"Uhm," was the man's reply.

"That's how I feel about this place. Strange, I guess."

"Uhm."

Underhill took another pull of his drink. The man took another pull from his.

"This drink always reminds me of England. It's made in Ireland, I know, but I always think of England. I've been there, I think. It's nice. You ever been?"

No response.

"I don't think I've been there in ages, though."

There was a short pause and old Mr. Underhill reminisced in his mind for a while. Something he had not let himself do for a long, long time. And that started it. He turned and just opened up. He told the strange man at the bar his whole story. Every detail, every moment. His experiences, his family. His dreams and his nightmares. He told it matter-of-factly, without dramatics. After he was done, he drank the last of his Guinness. He thanked the man for listening and told the bartender that the man's next round was on him. Then old Mr. Underhill put enough money on the bar to cover himself and the

man, and then he looked around the place one last time and walked out the door.

The man at the bar didn't move for a while. He placed his large hand over his large brow and cried. Quiet and to himself he cried. His large shoulders heaved and shuddered and his large hand over his large brow covered his face from any who would point and stare.

The bartender came by and asked if he wanted a refill.

"Ungah Dunggah," he mumbled as he turned to leave. No, he had had enough.

One Inside the Other—
Science Fiction and Advertisement
by Hathaway The Crazy Beatnik from “The Subliminal Man”
(Eva Sevcikova)
(with a stolen excerpt from Dr. Franklin’s diary)

I.

A SUPERMARKET IN A SUBLIMINAL LAND

What thoughts I have of you tonight, J.G. Ballard, for I walked down the sidestreets under the neon sign with a headache self-conscious looking at the night city.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went into the neon fruit supermarket, buying all these things I didn’t need!

What products and what merchandise! Whole families shopping at night! Aisles full of customers. Wives in Cosmetics, babies in the toy section!—and you, Ralph Nader, what were you doing down by the tobacco and liquor aisle?

I saw you, J.G.Ballard, beardless, lonely old grubber, poking at the dog food and Bacardi bottles and eyeing the meatless chicken.

I heard you asking questions of each: Will I get a writer’s block?

Are those blue circles on the ceiling? Are chickens vegetarians?

Which way are we going, J.G.Ballard? The doors close in an hour. How many novels will you write this year?

(I touch your stories and upon seeing myself in them I feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night by the freeway until we see the sign? Maybe communism is indeed a good idea but Russia didn’t try hard enough. We didn’t let her.

Ah, dear father, what America did you have in mind when writing your stories?

II.

Not like Dante

discovering a commedia

upon the slopes of heaven

I would paint a different kind

of Paradiso

in which the people would be free

from gathering more and more shit

because there would be no Andie MacDowells and Cindy Crawford
telling them

how much younger

they have to look

to create a perfect family picture

of a man and a woman

(of course)

and there would be no

fast-paced commercials blasting at you

at the gas station

while you are filling up

your 40,000 dollar car

(that never went into a car-pool lane)

and emptying your brain into the trash can of
capitalism

and there would be no

plastic surgeons touching someone's boobs again
and again

too small or too big

(la mierda tel toro, I say)

nor any altars in the sky except

fountains of (good) science fiction

III.

And that's the way it always is and that's the way it always ends and the fire and the rose are one and forget it Doctor there are more important things happening now and they've started to build the first big signs and they'll soon have all the approach roads covered When they do we might as well stop thinking Our apathy is preposterous Don't we see that they are trying to transistorize our brains At every corner lure standardization commercialization materialization supplementation examination fornication mystification This world is full of fiction wherever you move left right up down around and around you can't escape it Everything around is invented and it smiles with a large grin showing off its bleached teeth while the supermarket managers and human resources managers and field directors for an investigation of new resources and the supervisor of the field director for an investigation of new resources O they all hum in the monotonous traffic each morning on the 605 the neon arteries of freeways are clogged with bad human cholesterol and while the drivers are jabbing away on their multi-cell phones their vanity plates talk to each other with a synthesized voice SUDNLEE WHOAMI? SICKO RUBBISH and LIFSUX ITZ 2MUCH PAYNE 4ONE2C and Holden is throwing up in the bathroom, clinging to the dirty floor trying to cover up a profanity on the wall and while trains are rushing at a supersonic speed distorting the blueprints of the future handing them over to pathological liars The Earth is a battlefield and we are losing don't you see it We are digging our own graves and Mr. Hilfiger and Mr. Gillette with a cigar in their mouths will nudge us into it I am tripping I am screaming but my mouth is full of metal staples I spit them out and get sucked into a long tunnel but there is no light at the end of it just a small package exclaiming SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Being Apathetic Causes Loss of Identity Mind Disease Self-Dignity and May Complicate One's Existence Aliens are all around me and they wear human faces and they wear my face

and I recognize them They are all me The only alien is me
and (un)loved and lost and found upon a riverbank along a
riverrun right where it all began and so begins again

IV.

FROM THE DIARY OF DOCTOR FRANKLIN:

I am waiting for the fourth TV set to come up
and I am waiting
for a redelivery of the DVD player
and I am waiting for someone
to finally put a Jacuzzi into my living room
and I am waiting
to buy my wife her thirty-fourth
bright red purse and red shoes
I am waiting for my diamond golf club
membership among other Armani androids
for I like to enjoy moments with a
Virginia Slim in my hand
and somebody else's hand on my "slim"
Yes I am waiting
for the discovery of oil in Arctica
and I am waiting for the American Eagle
to really spread its wings
and cover with its shadow the entire planet
and I am waiting
for the day when my pockets
will be filled with golden nuggets
and I am waiting for that new web site
to purchase "Basic Interacting With Human Beings for
Dummies"
and while I am waiting
I will turn on the TV
Friends is on

V.

Inventory—Things To Buy

Credit Card Number: 4563-8462-6481-1779

PIN Code: * * * *

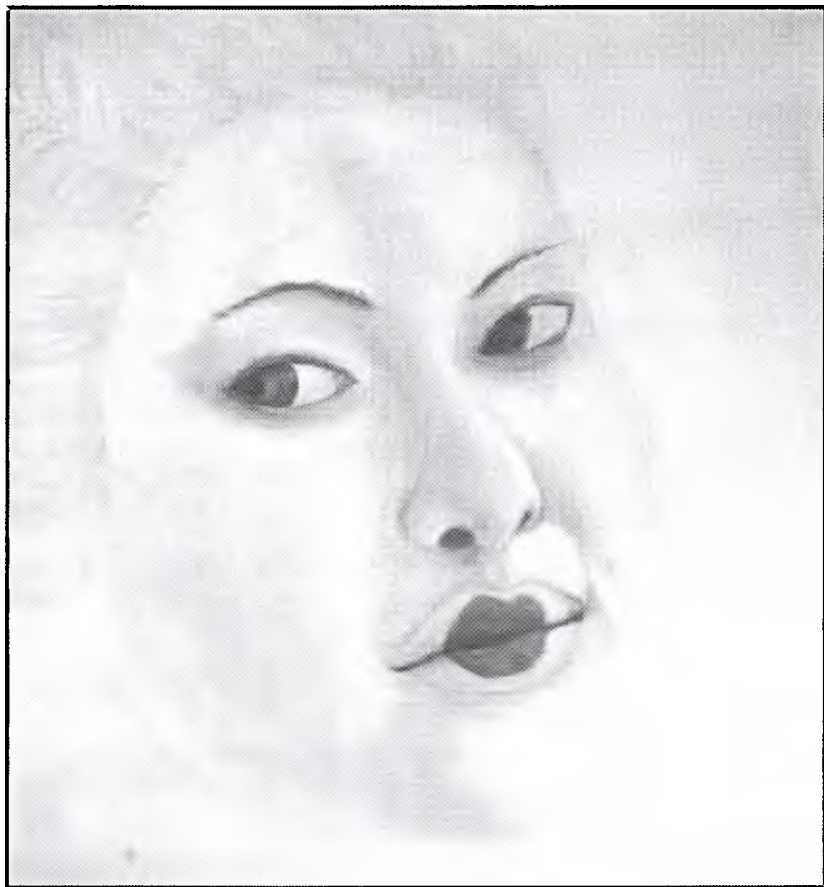
Buy Now! On Sale! Flat Rate \$1.99
Or trade your used products for new!

(Satisfaction guaranteed. If for some reason you are unhappy with our products, just ship them back and we will refund your money.)

Love	(previous model 2 months old)
Compassion	(4 months)
Patience	(7 months)
Honesty	(5 months)
Listening	(4 months)
Human Touch	(3 months)
Smile	(7 months)
Hug	(5 months)
Kindness	(8 months)

One's Identity	No longer available— Product discontinued
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Thank you for your attention. Have a good day!



Geisha No. 1, 2000 by Jo Fan Huang

Non-Fiction

Franz Marc's Repetitious Nature

by Katherine Baskett

German expressionist Franz Marc produced a painting entitled "Bathing Girls", just like everyone else, and this painting depicted the primitive paradise scene of women in nature, just like everyone else. In a fairly typical painting of the time, this non-naturalistic image carefully integrates woman with nature and simultaneously evokes the peaceful tranquility of a primitive paradise scene.

Much like Gauguin's paintings from the Tahiti series and those of other artists, nude women are either posed passively, such as in "la Orana Maria", "The Loss of Virginity", "Life and Death, Women Bathing", and "Spirit of the Dead Watching", or concerning themselves with decorative matters, such as grooming. An example of this is Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's "Bathers in a Room". This nudity may have a conceptual intent, such as with Kirchner who believed that the most important subject matter was the nude in nature. This theme also corresponded in time to the nudist movement around Germany in which he was involved. To be nude was to be natural, and Marc also shared that belief. There is no modesty shown in the three women of "Girls Bathing". They do not try to hide their nakedness or even give it any particular emphasis. It is natural, and harmony with nature is ideal.

The paradise concept of harmony with nature is shown through the echoed lines of the female bodies with that of the trees. The lines are curved and peaceful, long and flowing, like tree boughs. Another painter who paralleled the lines of the female body with nature is Matisse in "Blue Nude". In this painting, the mountainous arch of the nude woman's hip is exactly replicated in the arch of a palm frond. The angle between the foot and the leg is even mirrored by the angle between the frond above it with the palm tree in the right corner. This synchronicity between the form of the female body and forms in the landscape is therefore not very novel and groundbreaking.

The artist's parallel treatment of woman and nature assails the viewer even more repetitiously with the color palette and paint

texture. The color palette consists of non-naturalistic, mainly cool tones that are the same in figure and landscape. The paint application also renders the same effect with only moderate texture, thicker in some areas than others, that is equally applied to the figures as to the rocks and trees. This consistency in palette and texture also lends toward the conceptual idea of woman as close to nature, or nature as woman (fertile, decorative, primitive) and the non-naturalistic colors used employ the same convention appropriated by Kirchner, Matisse, Gauguin, Modersohn-Becker, Picasso, and numerous others. Such is also the case with the reduction of the figure to blocky monumental shapes and the emphasis of features that are characteristically female (breasts, hips, the v-line of the genitals).

Franz Marc believed, along with a significant portion of the artistic community, that woman is synonymous with nature. This theme pummels itself at the viewer through the formal conventions employed by the artist ad nauseum. By no means an original concept, or painting, "Bathing Girls" sadly becomes relegated, at least in this viewer's eyes, to a well-painted and enjoyably decorative cliché.

The Subjugation of the Beast— the Use of Meat in Art *by Katherine Baskett*

All through the history of art, strange objects and bizarre images have been appropriated by the resourceful artist. One of the more often overlooked subjects is meat. Meat, according to the advertising industry is what's for dinner, but it also serves a function in art. It has a wide range of meanings and connotations, but for the sake of facilitating meaning, three categories of generalization have been formed: "Lunch Meat", "Dark Meat", and "Heavy Meat". The distinctions among these three categories are found in the method and meaning of appropriating meat.

Lunch Meat is the most benign category. These artists use

meat in the least disturbing manner and it does not leave the viewer with a nauseous feeling, like a later category, Dark Meat. All the Lunch Meat pieces are also paintings of meat, not artworks that are actually made of meat. The subject of meat is not taken too seriously and is used in the “meat as dinner” motif. Eduard Manet used meat, taking the form of dead fish and shrimp, as the subject matter in his 1864 oil-painting, entitled *Still Life with Fish and Shrimp*. In this painting, the fish form a central, x-shaped composition consisting of two dead fish and a small pile of shrimp. Painted in his typical realist manner, Manet creates a neutral piece decidedly unladen with heavy, psychological symbolism and effect. Another Lunch Meat work is Tom Wesselman’s *Still Life #12*. This 1962 collage features a dinner-table scene complete with a ham, two cans of Café Bustelo, Coca-Colas, a camera, apple, and checked tablecloth. This pop-art collage maintains a cheerful and banal look at lunch. While the background elements of the tablecloth, wall, and view outside are flat and composed of diffusing patterns, the collaged-on ham resembles an advertisement and stands out with prominence in the picture. Another light look at meat is in Roy Lichtenstein’s *Standing Rib* from 1962. In another example of American pop-art, Lichtenstein stylizes a large rib-meat section in a blank background. The rib floats in an undefined space in Lichtenstein’s typical comic-book style. The marbling of the front side of the meat provides an interesting patterned contrast to the more orderly striping along the top and right side. Overall, this painting, like the other Lunch Meat pieces, offers a bland and light-hearted treatment of meat as a subject matter. There appears to be little significance in the artists’ choice of meat as a subject and it is simply like a protein-rich genre subject, with depicted objects and scenes from everyday life.

On the most disturbing and psychotic side of meat in art, and perhaps even in art in general is that of the Dark Meat category. This shadowy corner of subjects is inhabited by the infamous Viennese actionists, namely Hermann Nitsch, whose “performances” often included disemboweling animals and covering himself with blood. This actual appropriation of meat into art makes the realization that the originator of meat was once a live animal more visceral and immedi-

ate. The art's effect on the viewer is also quite direct and unfiltered, unlike through painting where only a signifier for meat is shown. The Dark Meat group consists of all three-dimensional, installation, or performance pieces. It is because of this direct interaction and confrontation with the meat that this category is defined. What the audience is forced to endure seems like nothing less than severe psychological trauma. A highly sensationalist display of cruelty is set up with only the umbrella of art to validate it. Hermann Nitsch, the leader of the Viennese action movement, rationalized and defined the reasons for the cruelty in the following passage from Contemporary Artists:

...(Form/aesthetic-essential aim of practice of art. Intensified registration of the world through the form. Form condenses the surrounding world in the enjoying senses and moves it closer to us, drives us more strongly into our own liveliness, drives us more strongly into being. Practice of art-mystic of being. Aestheitic even deep into cruelty. Aesthetic of the cruel.) Establishing synesthetically relations between :

perception of touch,

perception of taste,

perception of smell,

perception of acoustic and visual registrations

shall inspire our senses orgiastically. The accelerating activation of all senses can be compared to psychoanalysis. Instead of associating, actions are instituted which heighten the perceptions of the senses until the endpoint of orgiastic 'abreaction'. (Evaluation of elemental sensuous aggressive-sadistic perceptions, dilacerating of raw meat, disembowelment of slaughtered animal cadavers and trampling on the entrails. The use of cry-and noise actions/noise music). The result is a descent into subconscious regions... After the "abreaction" provoked by the play, the excessive can be overcome. There comes a quiet, meditative understanding of existence... The concentrated aesthetic liturgy of the O.M. Theatre [orgies-mysteries theatre] can expand over the en-

tire human life and can transform the process of living into a positive, life-enjoying, aesthetic ritual (690).

Nitsch's outlook on life was so affected by the second world war that he can justify this retreat into horror as a means of psychological release. This Dark Meat artist represents the most psychotic side of the scale and fully incorporates the death and cruelty aspect of meat into his art.

Though there may be some twisted and convoluted reason behind Dark Meat, Nitsch's diatribe seems hidden behind exclusionary and unnecessarily complex language. Thus the spectacle of animal cruelty and the brutality of man seems to be just one more sensationalist performance an audience endures without really understanding why.

Another artist, Robert Delford Brown, joins Nitsch in the Dark Meat category. Though much more harmless than Nitsch, and less likely to induce a fit of vomiting, Brown nonetheless uses actual meat in his show and incorporates much blood and bizarre ambience into his performance/installation piece in 1964, held in a meat locker. In this meat-show the artist hung copious amounts of the raw meat from meat hooks and partitioned off the areas into little sections with lingerie fabric. The area was also doused with a gallon of perfume and white butcher coats were handed out to the audience to wear inside the meat locker. The reactions to this show now seem rather placid and blase in contrast to the environment the audience was placed in.

'Don't get blood on my bag!' one lady admonished her husband. 'Ooh,' she exclaimed, 'Look, a bronchial tube!'

'Very gutsy show,' a man commented dryly.

'Look, Marvin, they're hearts!' announced a lady playing 'identification.'(Vale and Juno 146).

It is not just the artwork that is disturbing in this case. It is the audience's reaction, or lack thereof, to be more specific. This flat effect seems to be symptomatic of a post-war numbness and disbelief in the harsh realities of life. This numbness and emotional

neutrality was exactly what Brown and Nitsch was trying to exorcise from the consciousness in order to spark new life into the scarred psyche.

The last category for the use of meat in art is that of Heavy Meat. In this category, meat is used to create a symbolic meaning. Though some of the Heavy Meat pieces incorporate actual meat, like the Dark Meat category, the ones in this section lack the deliberately abrasive and cruel intent of the artist. Meat may have a sinister connotation, but not nearly as directly as with the previous category.

The first example of Heavy Meat is Salvador Dali's 1933 painting *Gala with Two Lamb Chops Balanced on her Shoulder*. In this painting, a circular composition ends with a woman's face angled toward the meat resting on her shoulder, thus directing the circular flow of the piece to finally rest on the image of the pork chops. Though occupying a small space on the canvas, this compositional trick allows the chops to seem larger than they are, thus placing some sort of importance upon their meaning. It is unfortunate then that the surrealist nature of Dali's paintings obscures any linear or clear interpretation of the symbolism involved. It will always remain unclear to the viewer what the pork chop means to Dali due to the ambiguous imagery and multi-leveled nature of surrealist artworks in general.

Another Heavy Meat painter is Francis Bacon. While Bacon's art does smack of psychological distress and impairment, it lacks the sadistic and gory nature of Dark Meat art. Francis Bacon's imagery is also a product of post-war disillusionment. In his 1946 painting, *Painting*, a shadowy figure veiled by an umbrella stands in front of a huge beef carcass with a guard rail-like structure enclosing the figure with slabs of meat draped on it. On his repeated use of meat imagery, Bacon had this to say:

I've always been very moved by pictures about slaughterhouses and meat, and to me they belong very much to the whole thing of the Crucifixion. There've been extraordinary photographs which have been done of animals just being taken up before they were slaughtered; and the smells of death. We don't know, of course, but it appears by these

photographs that they're so aware of what is going to happen to them, they do everything to attempt to escape. I think these pictures were very much based on that kind of thing, which to me is very, very near this whole thing of the Crucifixion (Fineberg 144).

Other Heavy Meat artist, Damien Hirst, dealt with installation art and sculpture, as opposed to the filtered medium of painting. Damien Hirst, a contemporary British artist, often used whole animals suspended in tanks filled with formaldehyde, such as in *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* from 1991. In this piece, a dead tiger shark is suspended in a green formaldehyde-filled tank. Though not the impersonal and unidentifiable traditional format of meat, the dead shark nonetheless confronts the viewer with an image of mortality, as indicated by the title. While eerie and slightly intimidating, this shark does not have the hard emotional impact of Dark Meat, nor the happy picnicking attitude of the Lunch Meat. Its insistence upon the symbol of death and the separation between the dead and living makes it Heavy Meat.

The use of meat in art can vary greatly from a banal picnic scene to the darkest regions of human behavior. Possibly as a reminder of the inevitability of death or possibly as a tool of catharsis, meat contains within its bag of tricks the simple disguise as dinner or a bloody philosophical battle between emotional impotence and the deafening scream of cruelty. One of the most controversial mediums and one of the most savage subjects, meat is man's subjugation of the beast and cruelty towards the primitive.

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**Once Upon a Time:
A Fairy Tale about Science and Literature
by Ryan D. Fong**

Once upon a time,

Aristotle thought there were four elements of matter: fire, air, water, earth. Earth likes to fall into the center, i.e. dropping a clump of dirt falls to the ground. That's why the sphere is the most basic shape.

Once upon a time,

Aristotle wrote that the purpose of tragedy was to arouse fear and pity in the audience. This would happen through the downfall of a larger than life character. Euripedes was the most tragic of the dramatists.

Once upon a time,

Mandelbrot, this crazy, cooky math whiz freak started playing around with his computer. He found a picture, not just any picture, but one where the big picture had little versions of itself EVERYWHERE.

Once upon a time,

Flip, this annoying secretary/mail clerk with a glorified HiTek title branded her forehead with the letter "i." Pretty soon EVERYBODY started doing it, and you could see them EVERYWHERE.

Once upon a time,

stodgy old science professors gathered together in the big teachers' lounge in the sky and drank their coffee. They unanimously decided that from there on out no anomalies were going to taint their normal science. They were happy with their paradigm thank you!

Once upon a time,

stodgy old English professors gathered together in the big teacher's lounge in the sky and drank their coffee. They unanimously decided that from there on out no feelings were going to taint their new literary analysis. They were happy with their paradigm thank you!

Once upon a time,

Lorenz was monitoring weather systems in his old klunky computer. Changing starting and parameters in three equations and feeding them through iteration loops, he found a butterfly. Not just any butterfly, but a butterfly that was like Bradbury's butterfly. Except this

one flapped its wings in Peking and caused rain storms in New York city. Now that's some sTRanGe attactor, baby!

Once upon a time,
Sandra Foster and Bennet O'Reilly were monitoring a bunch of klunky sheep. Trying to get the world's most stupid animals to learn a new skill, they finally got a hint from Shirl: find a different sheep. Not just any sheep, but one that was just a little bit greedier, a little bit more ornery, a little bit more full of gumption: basically, a bellwether. Now that's some STRagGe sheep, baby!

Once upon a time,
the general public thought that they lived in a clockwork universe. TOTALLY Newtonian, TOTALLY deterministic. All we need to do is know what forces there are and we can know what's going on for all time. And they slept just a little bit more comfortably that night, safe in their cozy deterministic beds.

Once upon a time,
the general public thought that they liked Romantic poems and novels. TOTALLY about nature, TOTALLY more better. All we need to do is go into a garden with some sheep and a babbling brook and everything would be okay and fine. And they slept quite comfortably, after reading Tintern Abbey together.

Once upon a time,
a system was iterated. Quite possibly the logistic map, or the Henon map, or the exponential map. The variables changed according to the results of the previous iteration. They were fed back again and again and again into the equation, and there was chaos.

Once upon a time,
there was a fad. Quite possibly hair bobbing, or lava lamps, or hula hoops. The fads change, but they always crop back up eventually as styles and tastes come back as "retro". They were fed back again and again into the mass culture media machine, and there was N'Sync.

Once upon a time,
Seamus Lagan taught a class called Chaos in Science and Literature. He had his students create a graph of various Lyapanov numbers, which was long, tedious, and very confusing. And his students

wanted to bang their heads against the desks.

Once upon a time,

dAve pAddy taught a class called Chaos in Literature and Science. He had his students read David Harvey, which was long, tedious, and very confusing because of the socio-babble. And his students want to bang their heads against the desks.

And they lived happily ever after

And they lived happily ever after.

Gloria Anzaldua's
Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza
by Leslie Reynolds

After reading Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, some of her other works, as well as interviews with her, I would say her writings and key concepts are marked by rebellion. Rebellion against many things -- an oppressive dominant white culture in the US, the elements of her own Mexican culture which oppress women, a white dominated academia and the conventions it creates, a predominantly white perspective and discourse on feminist and lesbian theory, the domination of white culture through language, and many other concepts. Anzaldua demonstrates her adeptness with and great knowledge of traditional theory -- and then demonstrates her unwillingness to conform to and adopt these conventions. Instead, she chooses her own path and her own rules. She rejects abstract language and the English language -- the language of the academic world in the US. She introduces academia and her readers to new terms and phrases. In her own brand of theory she offers a new state of consciousness -- The New Mestiza Consciousness, embracing plurality, inclusivity, and even ambiguity. Anzaldua explains the key concepts of the New Mestiza Consciousness when she states:

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. (Anzaldua 102)

Her writing style and philosophies are political, social, academic, personal. Above all, her world view as reflected through her writing, expresses action. There is no separation between her writing and her message. As she critiques Western theory for its limitations and objectivity, so do her writing style and key concepts display inclusivity. In order to explore *The New Mestiza Consciousness* she draws upon her personal experiences, poetry, historical information, sayings, quotes, and musical forms and song lyrics. In an interview, Anzaldua noted,

Theory doesn't have to be written in an abstract and convoluted language. Writers like myself are considered low theorists, and writings like *Borderlands* are considered 'low theory' . . . because it's accessible. People can understand it. It's got narrative, it's got poetry and I do the unforgivable -- I mix genres. (Galenet Document 5)

And in order to express her critique she utilizes English, various forms of Spanish, and Nahuatl. The territory she traverses in her work is reflected in the very form it takes.

Her resistance to academic form can also be seen in her essay "Speaking in Tongues: A Letter To Third World Women Writers", included in the collaborative work *This Bridge Called My Back*. Her essay takes the form of a letter dated 21 May 1980 and opens, "Dear mujeres de color, companions in writing"-- again, she mixes languages, or displays "code switching" as she calls it. And her essay/letter closes with a sincere "Love, Gloria". In this piece, she not only leaves out abstract academic language, she replaces it with empathy and a sense of common experience. She resists the distancing language of academic convention.

Anzaldua's writing can be characterized as radical. Her use of Spanish and Nahuatl in *Borderlands/La Frontera* and in her other works, makes a statement about exclusion. Just as the predominantly white and male academy excludes other experiences, cultures, and languages, and therefore writes for an exclusive audience, so her writing excludes those readers not proficient in Spanish and Nahuatl or those not familiar with particular Mexican or Pre-Con-

quest concepts. Similarly, she also addresses this exclusion as her essay addresses a particular audience -- "Third World Women Writers" -- blatantly addressing her intended audience.

It is interesting that this radical reaction against exclusion can also be seen in Anzaldua's classroom where she teaches at University of California Santa Cruz. In the spring of 1988 she taught a Third World women of color literature class, and in an interview recalled the classroom dynamic she reacted against, a classroom in which the white students took over discussion, thus silencing the people of color in the class. In the interview she reflects

I told them that what happened in class was a microcosm of what happens in the world and this was a course about women of color and that we had been silenced for a long time, and that women of color find it very, very hard to speak up because the context is always not theirs. And I wanted the context to be theirs and I wanted to hear from women of color first, men of color second. . . And lastly, that I wanted to hear from white people. (Galenet Document 4)

One may find similarities in her work to other schools of criticism such as postcolonial criticism, lesbian criticism, or feminist criticism, and her work is definitely influenced by social movements such as the Chicano movement, the gay movement, women's liberation in the US, and the Chicana feminist movement in the US. However, her aim is not to fit into a particular or conventional category; instead she wiggles free of all categories and creates her own space. Her main assertions and writings are directly tied to her own personal experience in the world, and she not only escapes categories in her writing, but in her life as well. In an earlier work she co-edited, entitled *This Bridge Called My Back Writings By Radical Women of Color*, she counters the notion that this eluding categories is mere ambivalence when she says,

You say my name is ambivalence? Think of me as Shiva, a many- armed and legged body with one foot on brown soil, one in white, one in straight society, one in the gay world, the man's world, the women's, one limb in the literary, another in

the working class, the socialist, and the occult worlds. A sort of spider woman hanging by one thin strand of web. Who, me confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me. (Moraga 205)

Both her involvement in *This Bridge Called My Back*, and her main piece *Borderlands/La Frontera*, work from the standpoint that Third World women can use writing and language as a means of power and resistance against oppression. It is in this way her writing is the most political. Through being published and included on various universities' syllabi, she not only demands that academia and theory evolve and accept other perceptions, she also has a clear political agenda in the very act of her writing. In her letter to Third World women she says:

Writing is dangerous because we are afraid of what the writing reveals: the fears, the angers, the strengths of a woman under a triple or quadruple oppression. Yet in that very act lies our survival because a woman who writes has power. And a woman with power is feared. (Moraga 171)

In this way, Anzaldua gave women of color a voice that was previously not represented. Perhaps her earlier work, *This Bridge Called My Back*, published in 1981, created a space for Third World women writers since fewer were published at the time. Anzaldua's letter to Third World women writers encouraged other women of color to share their experience and struggle as means of empowering themselves and other women who share such double or triple oppression. Anzaldua clears a space for other women of color writers as she reveals in her letter, "the meaning and worth of my writing is measured by how much I put myself on the line and how much nakedness I achieve" (Moraga 172). In this manner, she takes the initiative to tell Third World women that it is okay and necessary to share individual experience in order to overcome and resist oppression. We can also see this political agenda and one of her purposes in writing, when she states, "we must perform visible and public acts that may make us more vulnerable to the very oppressions we are

fighting against. But our vulnerability can be the source of our power” (Galenet Document 5). Therefore, because of the personal nature of her writing, she creates her own vulnerability, but also reverses this, as the vulnerability metamorphoses into a source of power through writing.

In an interview with her included in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she comments how in her involvement as an editor of *This Bridge Called My Back*, she was “trying to convince other women of color that they really have a voice worth being listened to and being published.” (Anzaldua 231). This is clearly one of her aims as a writer and publisher of books -- to help open a space for other writers who are women of color and particularly Chicana writers. In the same interview included in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, when asked about the reception of the book by Chicanas, she explains

They saw that I was code-switching which is what a lot of Chicanas were doing in real life as well, and for the first time after reading that book they seemed to realize, ‘Oh my way of writing and speaking is okay . . . So if she [Gloria Anzaldua] does it, why not me as well? The book gave them permission to do the same thing. (Anzaldua 231-2)

Therefore, in encouraging other women of color to write and share their perspective, we also discover some of the reasons why she writes and also reasons for which she does not. Anzaldua closes her letter to “mujeres de color, companions in writing” with: “find the muse within you. The voice that lies buried under you, dig it up. Do not fake it, try to sell it for a handclap or your name in print” (Moraga 173). She seems to say, share your experience in the world in order to resist the dominant culture, and do not be tempted to “sell-out”, for your voice *is* legitimate.

Clearly, another of Anzaldua’s motives in creating her critique *Borderlands/La Frontera*, is to present an accurate portrayal of history, to educate people without an Anglocentric perspective. In her first chapter she discusses the absorption of Mexican land into the southwest United States. She states:

In the 1800s, Anglos migrated illegally into Texas, which was

then part of Mexico, in greater and greater numbers and gradually drove the tejanos (native Texans of Mexican descent) from their lands, committing all manner of atrocities against them. (Anzaldua 28)

Anzaldua, through her historical accounts, re-educates her readers and counters the Anglocentric angles of history books and education in the US. She rectifies the biased view of history which does not paint an accurate picture of realities -- one being the formation of the Mexico US border. She explains that with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, it left 100,000 Mexican citizens on this side, annexed by the conquest along with the land. The land established by the treaty as belonging to Mexicans was soon swindled away from its owners. The treaty was never honored and restitution, to this day, has never been made. (Anzaldua 29)

She also goes on to discuss the lynchings and shootings of Mexicans by the Texas rangers, and how thousands of Chicanos were forced to flee to Mexico abandoning their ranches and farms. She interrupts this historical account with an indented two lined phrase: "My grandmother lost all her cattle, they stole her land"(Anzaldua 30). Thus, Anzaldua ties this historical reality to her own family history and personal identity. In writing this way, she also resists the distancing, objective stylistics of Western historical accounts.

Perhaps in her attempt to "point out what was missing in previous analyses, and [in her] attempt to rewrite and to correct", one could do a post colonial reading of Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Gugelberger 584). In various ways, Anzaldua has written her text as a reaction against a world view and history which have been colored by US imperialism (such as in the above passages). If postcolonial writing is thought of as "the slow, painful, and highly complex means of fighting one's way into European-made history . . . a process of dialogue and necessary correction" -- then it is in this way, that Anzaldua's text can be read through a postcolonial hand lens (Gugelberger 582). According to the *Johns Hopkins Guide to*

Literary Theory and Criticism, although 'postcolonial' has been used to describe writing and reading practices grounded in colonial experiences outside of Europe but as a consequence of European expansion and exploitation of 'other' worlds [. . .] it is also related to other concepts that have resulted from internal colonization, such as the repression of minority groups. (Gugelberger 582)

In the interview attached to *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldua does allude to the way in which some of her works view Chicanas as "internal exiles within [their] own country" (Anzaldua 243). This is true of *Borderlands/La Frontera* -- we do get the sense of a Chicana exile living in the Southwest, or Aztlan -- a place most fundamentally belonging to her. Although, Anzaldua also points to problematic issues within postcolonial academics when she says:

It is okay to listen to a black man like Homi Bhaba from Britain -- import him to the United States and listen to him and his thoughts about post-coloniality -- rather than take somebody from California who is a Chicano/a and who has experienced some other things. If you are very exotic, like being from Australia, Africa, India, et cetera, this legitimates you more than being an internal exile. We still don't receive much attention and often aren't listened to at all. (Anzaldua 243-244)

So, here we see how *Borderlands/La Frontera* differs from traditional postcolonial theory as it focuses on internal colonization. However, both postcolonialist theory and Anzaldua's writing seem to share an "involve[ment] in a broad network of conflicting attempts at intervention into the master narrative of Western discourse" (Gugelberg 583). But where I see postcolonial criticism most clearly in agreement with Anzaldua's work is in the way it is "essentially radical in the sense of demanding change" (Gugelberg 584).

Although in *Borderlands/La Frontera* Anzaldua does attack the dominant white culture for the oppression of Mexican people, she also discusses the "cultural tyranny" imposed on Mexican women. She critiques these traditional gender roles within her own culture and elaborates,

The culture and Church insist that women are subservient to males. If a woman rebels she is a *mujer mala*. If a woman doesn't renounce herself in favor of the male, she is selfish. If a woman remains a *virgen* until she marries, she is a good woman. For a woman of my culture there used to be only three directions she could turn: to the Church as a nun, to the streets as a prostitute, or to the home as a mother. Today some of us have a fourth choice: entering the world by way of education and career and becoming self-autonomous persons. A very few of us. As a working class people our chief activity is to put food in our mouths, a roof over our heads and clothes on our backs. Educating our children is out of reach for most of us. Educated or not, the onus is still on woman to be wife/mother -- only the nun can escape motherhood. (Anzaldua 39)

It is passages such as these which make apparent the influences of the Chicana Feminist Movement on Anzaldua's writings and key concepts. In turn, the Chicana Feminist Movement and subsequent theory construction was influenced by both the Chicano Movement and the Feminist movement in the US. The movement emerged as Chicanas within the Chicano Movement came to realize problematic and contradictory concepts regarding gender roles within the movement. According to *Chicana Feminist Thought The Basic Historical Writings*, "the glorification and romanticization. . . of the Chicano family and the traditional role of women within the family by the movement appeared to these Chicanas to maintain women as second-class citizens of El Movimiento" (Garcia 17). It is in this way, one can recognize how some of Anzaldua's main assertions are aligned with Chicana Feminist theory. One can further recognize the influences of this movement as their anthology of *Basic Historical Writings* suggests,

. . . while Chicana feminists challenged some of the very cultural traditions that the Chicano movement was extolling, they did not in a blanket fashion condemn all traditions nor did they place all of the burden of their

oppression on male domination (Garcia 17-18).

These ideas seem to resonate with what Anzaldua discusses in her work. She also condemns the elements of her culture which imprison women, while embracing and elevating other concepts specific to her cultural heritage. Similarly, Anzaldua does not simply blame the oppression of Chicanas on male domination or racism, but instead suggests a complex relationship between race, class, gender, and culture.

Included in the anthology *Chicana Feminist Thought*, (of which Gloria Anzaldua is a contributor), is an essay entitled "Chicana Writer Breaking Out of Silence". This essay outlines many of the same ideas found in *Borderlands/La Frontera* about what it means to be a Chicana and a writer. Of the Chicana writer Sanchez says:

Everything in her society, the schools, the church, the home, has sought this goal for her: she must be sheltered from the evils, noise, confusion, from the realities of the outside world, from sex to politics, even at times from intellectual dialogue, to be considered acceptable. In short, she should make no intrusion into adult or male conversation. Now, the Chicana, by voicing her own brand of expression has rejected the latter in favor of telling anyone who wishes to read her work, hear her voice, exactly what she is not, and who she, in fact, is. (Garcia 66)

This clearly draws parallels to what Anzaldua aims to do in her writing and the struggles she expresses as a Chicana writer. Anzaldua addresses the barriers she came up against at a very early age for being a Chicana and wanting to write. According to one source which documents Anzaldua's life, she explained her situation growing up by saying:

my father. . . and mother had a very strong personality and I was very rebellious so they tried to mold me, especially my mother, into what a good Chicanita should be -- which was that good Chicanitas don't go to school, they drop out in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade . . . [and]

cook, clean, and sew. (Gale Document 2)

In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldua also discusses how growing up in a Mexican family, she was not encouraged to read or write and that she resisted traditional roles for girls. She says:

instead of ironing my younger brothers' shirts or cleaning the cupboards, I would pass many hours studying, reading, painting, writing. Every bit of self-faith I'd painstakingly gathered took a beating daily. Nothing in my culture approved of me. (Anzaldua 38)

In this way, Anzaldua examines the way in which the Chicana writer must resist against a white male academia, but also a culture which relegates women to the private sphere as nurturers and mothers. In Rita Sanchez's essay "Chicana Writer Breaking Out of the Silence", she addresses the courage involved in the Chicana writer's endeavor and says:

By her refusal to accept the myths, misinterpretations and the stereotypes of herself as presented by another, she has transcended the bounds of tradition, made a choice to determine her own life, and finally, has become the revolutionary voice. (Garcia 66)

This agrees with Anzaldua's presentation of her reflections on her own experience as a Chicana writer, and indeed she provides what she sees as a need for a "revolutionary voice".

The assertions made by Anzaldua and Chicana Feminists which emphasized the relationship between race, class, gender, and culture is where they diverged from Anglo feminists. The Chicana Feminist movement reacted against a feminist movement which was dominated by Anglo women and which did not consider the very different needs and experiences of women of color. This is another area in which Anzaldua appears to be in agreement with the aims and theory of Chicana Feminists. In Anzaldua's interview included in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she discusses her experience with this issue when she joined a Feminist Writer's Guild in San Francisco in

1977. She reflected on her experience with this alienation and says: They wanted to speak for us because they had an idea of what feminism was, and they wanted to apply their notion across all cultures. *This Bridge Called My Back*, therefore, was my sweeping back against that kind of 'All of us are women so you are all included and we were all equal'. Their idea was that we were cultureless because we were feminists; we didn't have any other culture. . . I was asked to leave my race at the door. (Anzaldua 231)

These statements made by Anzaldua are reminiscent of statements made by Consuelo Nieto a contributor to *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* . In the same vein, Nieto similarly notes:

The Chicana shares with all women basic needs that cut across ethnic lines. Yet she has distinctive priorities and approaches, for the Chicana is distinct from the Anglo woman. The Chicana world, culture, and values do not always parallel those of the Anglo woman. (Garcia 206)

Nieto further adds to the issue:

Anglo women sensitive to Chicanas as members of a minority must guard against a very basic conceptual mistake. All minorities are not alike. To understand the black woman is not to understand the Chicana. To espouse the cause of minority women, Anglos must recognize our distinctiveness as separate ethnic groups. (Garcia 209)

Indeed in publishing *This Bridge Called My Back*, which included writings by American women of Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, African, and Native American descent, Anzaldua and the other women involved in the collaborative work, did make a statement about a feminist movement which excluded women of color. Clearly, Anzaldua's outlook on this subject did not change between the earlier work, *This Bridge Called My Back* , and *Borderlands/La Frontera*. In both works she maintains a critique of the white feminist estab-

lishment. We hear this message in her contribution to the former work --

For the Third World woman, who has, at best, one foot in the feminist literary world, the temptation is great to adopt the current feeling-fads and theory-fads, the latest half truths in political thought, the half digested new age psychological axioms that are preached by the white feminist establishment. Its followers are notorious for 'adopting' women of color as their 'cause' while still expecting us to adopt to *their* expectations and *their* language. (Moraga 167)

It is in this line of thought that Anzaldua creates *Borderlands/La Frontera*, reacting against a white feminist establishment which works in the same way as other systems to oppress women. Anzaldua's border culture resists conformity to any type of conventional language or construction. Instead, by delving into the many borders within her life including the often contradictory nature of the indigenous and European contributions to her heritage, her experience as a Chicana in a US society where whites are in power, and being queer and rejected from both communities, she crystallizes her message through the personal rather than the abstract. By illustrating the specific borders in her life, she demonstrates the impossibility of categorizing such complex and interwoven realities within fixed forms and conventions.

This is directly related to how she addresses language in this book and the way in which she perceives language and identity in general. Her use of standard English, vernacular Spanish, and Nahuatl (a pre-conquest dialect), voices to her readers and the academic world that it is through these languages that she experiences the world, and therefore must utilize all of them in order to accurately articulate her realities. Another point which is made by this multilingual text is stated in the book's introduction, which is that "there is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience" (Anzaldua 8). In addition, the mixing of these languages also serves as "a larger critique of how the dominant group enforces domination through language"(Anzaldua 8). Within her broad dis-

cussion of language she also addresses her use of Chicano Spanish in the book and its history as a language. Anzaldua legitimizes this language when she says

Chicano Spanish is considered by the purist and by most Latinos deficient, a mutilation of Spanish. But Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally . . . Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language. (Anzaldua 77)

She applies the same concepts of why she must use multiple languages to express herself, to the formation of Chicano Spanish as a language. Of Chicano Spanish she states:

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves . . . (Anzaldua 77)

Thus, Anzaldua legitimizes and reinforces two issues through each other -- that she must use multiple tongues to express her multiple realities, and that this same multiplicity can be linked to the formation of Chicano Spanish.

One place we may recognize where Anzaldua may differ from this Chicana Feminist theory is revealed when Sanchez states of the Chicana writer, "her voice, in expressing a Chicana view, comes closer to expressing a collective Chicana voice"(Garcia 66). While Anzaldua does express a need for Third World women, and particularly Chicanas to write about their experience, she does not seem to promote a "collective Chicana voice". She seems to resist a collective voice of any kind and although she explores issues specific to her culture, she promotes the ability to create one's own space, to develop one's own ideas based on her own individual experience.

Throughout *Borderlands/La Frontera*, we not only hear Anzaldua's Chicana and feminist voice, we also hear her lesbian voice. She intricately weaves her various voices into a work that aims to break down a dualistic approach and ideology. Anzaldua effectively draws parallels between the binaries which are at work in race, class, gender, and sexuality. She discusses a society which practices this either-or binary system and states:

Contrary to some psychiatric tenets, half and halves are not suffering from confusion of sexual identity, or even from a confusion of gender. What we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other. . . . But I, like other queer people, am two in one body, both male and female. (Anzaldua 41)

Here, Anzaldua identifies our society as one that upholds rigid binaries, which lead to label those who deviate from gender and sexuality related norms, as having a psychological disorder. She makes reference to the way in which homosexuals are marginalized through contemporary institutions such as psychiatry, whose "Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals" still diagnose people with "Gender Identity Disorder" or "gender deviance" (Burke 60). Anzaldua ties these gender/sexuality binaries with the other ones at work in her life and clearly makes this link for us when she expresses:

For the lesbian of color, the ultimate rebellion she can make against her native culture is through her sexual behavior. She goes against two moral prohibitions: sexuality and homosexuality. Being lesbian and raised Catholic, indoctrinated as straight, I *made the choice to be queer*. . . . It's an interesting path, one that continually slips in and out of the white, the Catholic, the Mexican, the indigenous, the instincts. (Anzaldua 41)

Anzaldua makes the parallel between the way in which one's cultural and one's sexual/gender identity can be fluid. Anzaldua then, also clearly critiques a homophobic society which marginalizes the individual. It is in this critique that Anzaldua's writings are also simi-

lar to Lesbian theory which was an "outgrowth of the women's liberation and the gay liberation movements" (Zimmerman 329). According to the *John Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*:

the basic insight of lesbian critical theory was that the particularity of lesbian experience leads the writer to express her unique lesbian perspective in her texts. . . [and it aimed to] render lesbians visible in a society that had hitherto refused to notice them, to counter silence with lesbian speech. (Zimmerman 330)

It would seem that Anzaldua would agree with Lesbian theory's "basic insight", although just as classic Feminist theory excludes women of color, so does the early work of Lesbian theory. However, Anzaldua does seem to share some key assumptions with classic Lesbian theory, such as that "discursive practices -- literary texts, critical analysis, political theories -- proceed from lived experience" (Zimmerman 330). We do see great importance placed on "lived experience" in Anzaldua's critique and it is an essential source of her criticism. Many of the places where Anzaldua's ideas intersect with Lesbian theory, is also where this theory intersects with the related feminist, women's liberation, and gay movements which effected one another and overlap in some areas. However, Anzaldua would probably also agree with those who are skeptical of Lesbian theory for its tendency to "essentialize lesbian existence, to construct a unitary lesbian identity, and to privilege certain varieties of lesbian behavior over others" (Zimmerman 331). She would probably join them in their "offer [of] an anti-essentialist, rigorously historicized construction of lesbianism along the axes of gender and sexuality, and often of race and class as well" (Zimmerman 331).

Because of this critique of Lesbian theory, perhaps Anzaldua is more closely tied to Queer theory. In Ian Barnard's essay, "Gloria Anzaldua's queer mestisaje", he explains

that since queer politics explicitly speaks to, for, and from bisexuality, transexuality, and, in many cases, heterosexuality and other sexualities and identities, as well as lesbian and gay sexualities, its focus is on the construction and

politicization of (sexual) identities, rather than on their fixity or essential inevitability. (Barnard 3)

Therefore, queer theory seems to be in reaction to the perspective that gay and lesbian theory still reinforce essentialist categories and a hetero/homo sexual binary system. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldua explains that "being lesbian and raised Catholic, indoctrinated as straight, I *made the choice to be queer*. . . "(Anzaldua 41). Her statement highlights the political focus of the term "queer". She seems to suggest that "lesbian" is something she "is" because it is the decided upon label for her sexual identity -- that it is still a name imposed upon her, and that the dominant culture still "indoctrinates" or forces upon her the norm of straightness, but that she *chooses* to call herself "queer" as a political statement about the way in which gay and lesbian categories are still a part of a white middle class language. According to Barnard, "Anzaldua argues that the historically non-genteel connotations of 'queer' give more room to maneuver its definitional parameters" (Barnard 3). However, once again Anzaldua is also unsatisfied with adopting this term wholly, "particularly in its embodiment in a white queer theory that seeks to unify queers or appropriate queers of color" (Barnard 3). Anzaldua's use of the word "queer" also works to destabilize lesbian theory, not allowing her reader to get too comfortable with any term or pattern of thought. She seems to include queer theory into her diverse conversation because of its connotations of radicalness and bastardization -- she does not let us forget that she embraces all aspects of her situation and identity, even the ones which were imposed on her and meant to dehumanize. She seems to apply this connotation to her critique as she "politicizes queerness as an anti-imperialist and anti-racist (anti-) identity"(Barnard 4).

Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, is a text which involves many languages, brands of literary theory, literary genres, and political and social movements. As we understand a particular relevancy to one, so are we lead into the work of another. It is this eluding of essentialist categories and the aim of breaking down binaries which characterize Anzaldua's "New Mestiza Consciousness". In evaluat-

ing Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, I strongly agree with Barnard who offers:

No matter how many historical contexts any reader knows or studies, complete mastery of this text will always be elusive. As one reads Anzaldua's book, it becomes apparent that it needs to be understood within specific contexts, but each context in turn suggests others. Because the identities that Anzaldua elaborates resist stabilization, there is no bottom line context that reveals a final truth. Context is infinite. (Barnard 9-10)

This type of a sentiment brings up poststructuralist connotations, such as "there can be no mastery of a text . . . No single reader will be able to 'understand' every addressed identity" (Barnard 10). This notion can be brought to Anzaldua's text. This is what I valued most in the work of the New Mestiza Consciousness. Anzaldua poses an interesting concept -- that it is okay not to have access to everything in a text -- she creates a breach in the Western imperative that we must 'understand' it all -- instead she acknowledges fragmentation, partiality, and ambiguity as realities, and as ways of transcending duality.

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A 'Marvelous Assemblage of Strangest Human Beings, a Wondrous Study of Nature's Wildest Vagaries, A World of Oddest, most Amazing Physical Exceptions'

by Leslie Reynolds

Imagine a 19th century "dime museum", one of those that houses all types of freaks and oddities, like "Barnum's American Museum of Living Curiosities". People stand in line to gawk at the tallest man alive, the smallest woman alive, the bearded lady, the amazing half man half woman, and more. I imagine that I am one of these spectacles, blurring 'reality and illusion, experience and fantasy, fact and myth'. . . (Gamson 37).

My title is announced by the museum's guide: "come see our new attraction, this amazing physical exception who embodies East and West!" I am as the half man and woman display is-- a walking contradiction. My costume is split down the middle, one side, an elaborate kimono stitched to the other half, which is a Western female business suit. On one foot I wear the traditional Japanese *getta*, on the other, panty hose and a pump. My face on one side is the painted face of a geisha, the other left as it is. I hold a brief case in one hand, and I offer a tea cup in the other. I stand up on a platform and under lights which accentuate the sharp contrast of each side of my body. At my feet is a brief description of what I am, provided by the museum which reads:

This amazing creature is a lotus blossom of the East and at the same time, a shrewd independent businesswoman of the West. She is almost amphibious, at home in the office as well as the tea house. This rare find can obediently serve you a cup of tea or a bowl of rice, or she can create corporate documents or talk business. She can be found almost anywhere in the country if one looks close enough, easily adapting to different environments. This creature often struggles with itself as one side shuffles submissively behind her man, while the other side walks ahead to walk beside him. How does she get along with herself?!

As the people stare at me, I may pour them a cup of tea with a deep bow, or I may type on my laptop computer, busy with work. There are these times when I feel as though people read and create different signs which are placed in front of me, in front of my space in the museum. As an anomaly, they create a description or definition of what I am. I am exotic "other", Asian other, it wouldn't matter if I wore the traditional high collared Chinese garment or the kimono of Japan, they are all Asian, all somehow exotic in the same ways. I can be assertive like the Western woman, but perhaps always undermined by the subtle, gentle, and submissive Asian female that is imprinted on my DNA. Ultra feminine china doll, and masculine enough to survive in the office. What is reality and what is fantasy? What is illusion? I am an illusion. When people look at me, they do not see me, they see the painted face of a geisha girl superimposed over my face. Do I only appear confident, while inside they imagine a giddy and shy girl? In their fantasy is my upraised chin constantly pulled down by the weight of tradition, myth, and Asian blood heavy with ancient ritual? They envision this geisha-girl/ china-doll painted face, and it is exotic, erotic, and mysterious. They do not realize that their own culture has women who paint their faces everyday. Women pay homage to the altar of Revlon, L'oreal, Maybeline-- to their brushes and bottles of potions. Their ritual and ceremony begins every morning in front of their mirrored altar, lined with bottles, sacred instruments, and fluids. But this is not mysterious, this ritual is normalized--even expected.

However, there is also a side of me that embraces the spectacle, that can momentarily drift above the binaries which cut and paste my life together. There are moments now, when I am able to glimpse clearly at the experience of all people who embody contradiction. In that glimmer, I see the experiences of gay people, transsexuals, bisexuals, crossdressers, multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and many others who blur the borders that try to squeeze us into spaces we weren't meant to inhabit. Before this time and space that I inhabit now, I felt that I could never understand what these other individuals must go through, or maybe I didn't consider their feelings and sense of identity at all. But reading material written by or about these indi-

viduals and their experiences, identities, and existence in the world, created a new space-- in my head and in my heart that understood-- understood how people look at individuals and tell them what they are. I could relate to the feeling of not being in control of how others see you-- not to have the visible signs that prevent questions or stares-- that is, the white, middle class, heterosexual uniform that lets them get passed the cultural guards. I have mostly been proud not to wear the uniform, and inconvenienced at others. Trapped between praise for being exotic other, and not accepted for understanding and sliding into minority communities. Feeling criticized for not staying put. "Passing" either way. I sometimes feel as though only my parents and sister treat me like an ordinary person. I feel privileged to be able to go where my blonde haired blue eyed friends cannot, but I cannot be completely comfortable either way-- almost passing, but not always. I've always understood myself but with this knowledge, I feel I understand myself too well now, and I know why others see me the way they do-- and I do not know if I am glad to know, or sad.

Some of the thoughts and images I have created, blur what is reality and illusion, what is fact and myth, what is experience and fantasy. These boundaries appear in everyone's lives and are blurred in different ways, this is how I was able to present the way they exist in my life, and in my mind, through my sense of creativity. It is an eclectic manifesto, and not always following logically, but brings across I hope, the spaces I occupy.

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Controlling Images

by Leslie Reynolds

In order to support the claim that “gender is always already raced” one place to look is at the “controlling images” that permeate American popular culture and advertising. These controlling images use race and gender to create problematic representations for communities of color, thus physically, culturally, psychologically, and economically oppressing and alienating them. Rayna Green, Bell Hooks, and Yen Le Espiritu address these controlling images that oppress our Native American, African American, and Asian American populations. In thinking about controlling images, commercial food product logos immediately came to mind; subsequently, some of my research comes from the aisles that line our supermarkets. I will explore how especially women of color are exploited and misrepresented by a white patriarchal society, creating an image of “the exotic other”, and commercializing these images in order to sell their products.

As I began to really look at the packages of food products while I walked down the aisles of the supermarket, I noticed overwhelmingly the faces of women of color staring back at me from their labels. Whether it was the lovely tanned Hispanic woman with flowing black hair, immersed in tropical foliage and parrots beckoning from the bottle of margarita mix, or the dark skinned Indian woman with bare feet and midriff, tempting the consumer to buy Sharwood’s Tandoori Spice - and then there was Aunt Jemima, the Chiquita banana logo, the Land O Lakes butter girl, the array of women used to sell Celestial Seasonings tea, and so on. The more I looked, the more disturbing images of exoticized women I found.

The included image of the Land O Lakes logo, which represents a young Indian woman is a case in point, and within the image we see what Green discusses in her essay *The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture*. Green discusses the complex and enduring image of the Indian woman in American popular culture as the Princess, or her less civilized sister, the Squaw. I understand this particular image as a combination of

the two. In either case, these representations are in relation to white males. The Princess often has a lighter complexion, is dressed in European clothing, and represents the innocent maiden, while the Squaw darker in color, wears animal skins and represents the whore.

Green explains the history of the Indian woman as a symbol of the New World and says "artists, explorers, writers, and political leaders found the Indian as they cast about for some symbol with which to identify this earthy, frightening, and beautiful paradise"(Green 16). In this rendering, the Indian woman sits demurely, yet welcoming and wears the stereotypical beaded and tasseled dress. She also sports the demarcating feathers which stand at the back of her headband which sits atop her long black braids. Although in the American consciousness these things equate with Indian, she also has a light complexion and Caucasian features. In her essay, Green states, "cigar-store Princesses smile and beckon men into tobacco shops. They hold a rose, a bundle of cigars, or some tobacco leaves (a sign of welcome in colonial days), and they smile invitingly with their Caucasian lips"(Green 19). In this case, she holds butter (the product being sold) and she does seem to hold out to us something full of natural goodness. This image works on largely an unconscious level, and this earthy, innocent maiden offers us "sweet cream". The inclusion of the term "sweet cream" also reminds us of something very colonial when people still had to churn their own butter, and almost seems to promise this kind of homemade quality. The Indian woman also sits among green grass, water, and blue skies, thus the association of Indian female with earthiness and nature is reinforced. Although when we reach for butter on the shelf we probably don't think about all these components, when broken down, we see how stereotypes of race and gender are tied to this commercial image.

Yen Le Espiritu also discusses controlling images, primarily through film, for Asian men and women. She explores the two choices given to Asian women: "either she is cunning Dragon Lady or the servile Lotus Blossom Baby. Though connoting two extremes, these stereotypes are interrelated: Both eroticize Asian women as exotic 'others' " (Espiritu 361). We can examine the included Celestial

Seasonings label for Mandarin Orange Spice tea with these stereotypes in mind. The label displays a rendering of a Chinese woman presented in the ultra feminine China Doll image, with a porcelain face, rose bud lips, and blossoms surrounding her. She wears an adaptation of a traditional high-collared garment and foregrounds misty cliffs and village scenery. This image is the one Espiritu quotes as "... the Lotus Blossom stereotype, reincarnated throughout the years as the China Doll, the Geisha Girl, the War Bride, or the Vietnamese prostitute - many of whom are the spoils of the last three wars fought in Asia" (Espiritu 362). Thus, she describes the exotic female other in relation to a white American consciousness. The company utilizes an exotic and commercialized representation of an Asian woman to advertise the "exotic" name they've created: "Mandarin Orange Spice". Related to this, is the statement Bell Hooks makes in her essay *Selling Hot Pussy*, "[t]his new representation is a response to contemporary fascination with an ethnic look, with the exotic Other who promises to fulfill racial and sexual stereotypes, to satisfy longings"(Hooks 73).

With these same ideas in mind, we can also disassemble the included label for Celestial Seasonings green tea. The woman wears exotic and elaborate clothing and a head piece and stands in the foreground to the Great Wall of China among cliffs and mountains. However, this woman does not appear to be Chinese or Asian at all. Instead, she has the angelic face of a Botticelli - this adaptation of European features was also part of Green's essay regarding the Native American woman. Her presentation as a queen or princess also relates to Green and Espiritu's discussions of princesses as part of an exotic nobility. Although we can identify the woman's European face, we understand the mysterious and mystical connotations being presented; this configuration was also presented in the Land O Lakes label mentioned earlier.

Perhaps one of the most recognizable representations of a non-white female on a label is Aunt Jemima smiling off of a maple syrup bottle. With her head wrapped in a kerchief, and her dark, jovial, full-cheeked face, she represents the oppressive "mammy" stereotype for black women. This image has been used for decades

and its origins in slavery are even older. I went to the grocery store in search of her, but found her replaced by a more contemporary depiction of a smiling black woman. I found it interesting that the company retired her image but kept the visage of a black woman and the name "Aunt Jemima". They may have modernized her image, but they are still depending on the stereotyped figure of the "mammy" that has been ingrained in the American consciousness. The company was unwilling to give up the image of a black woman (connoting their previous mammy figure), thus these oppressive images still haunt us today. In this way, "[p]opular culture provides countless examples of black female appropriation and exploitation of 'negative stereotypes' to either assert control over the representation or at least reap the benefits of it"(Hooks 65).

There are countless other representations of women of color presented as "the exotic other" in order to sell products. The images I have explored in advertisements are far more complex than can be examined in such a brief analysis. However, through this analysis of American marketing the idea that "gender is always already raced" can be realized and confirmed. Espiritu articulates the issue well when she states, "as categories of difference, race and gender relations do not parallel but intersect and confirm each other, and it is the complicity among these categories of difference that enables US elites to justify and maintain their cultural, social, and economic power"(Espiritu 366). Perhaps the largest danger of these "controlling images" is that they become part of the American language, ideology, and iconography that functions primarily on an unconscious level.

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The Electric Industry: A Natural Monopoly.

By Natalie Olivas

Introduction:

In 1996 California passed Assembly Bill 1890 (AB1890). This deregulated the market for electricity from a 50-year monopoly into a supposed competitive market. The reasoning behind deregulation was relatively simple; more competition would result in lower prices for the consumer, or so it was thought. Five years later, California is experiencing a crisis that is threatening to throw the entire nation into a recession. Despite promised competition, most consumers still cannot choose their electric producer. Prices are sky-rocketing. The utilities are going bankrupt. Public safety is a huge concern as rolling blackouts are a reality. What went so wrong?

Aspects:

Electricity has become an essential resource in today's society. It is a product without which our economy, and life as we know it, would cease to exist. At the very least, it is a factor in keeping the public safe. Ethically, can utilities deny a city electricity without harming some or all of its individuals? As we place more importance on electricity in our society, the answer becomes a resounding no. Given this, electricity is a commodity that needs to be controlled so that it is reliable and services all.

In 1996, however, there was no reality of rolling blackouts. Industries lobbied politicians because they wanted to be able to bargain with utilities about their electric rate. The theory that more competition equals lower prices for the consumer won. Politicians saw this as a win-win situation as long as there was an independent body providing reliability, namely the Independent Systems Operator (ISO). The Legislation passed unanimously through both houses of Congress. What was once a political celebration is now a political disaster as

politicians try frantically to fix California's electricity crisis.

Economically, things look miserable at best. Economic growth is sure to slow due to increasing costs of electricity.¹ New businesses that would have started up in California will look for other more lucrative places in which to operate at lower costs. The stigma caused by the crisis has reverberated all over the nation, greatly, affecting the tourist industry. Growth in almost every industry in California has and will continue to see decline.

Due to the decline in economic growth, unemployment is sure to rise. With businesses moving elsewhere, jobs, too, are on the move. Utilities are struggling to function at prices less than average fixed costs, which is proven by the utilities' applications for bankruptcy². Obviously, stability is threatened under deregulation. This situation is also affecting the security of the market. Utilities were once thought of as a sound and conservative investment. The market was one that, although regulated, provided a nice 6- 8 percent return.³ Now, stocks have plunged and risks have increased. Overall, stockholders have to pay the bill for the economic disaster.

The possibility of providing electricity to only those who can afford it involves economic injustice. The income inequality between the rich and the poor is bound to increase. If electricity continues to operate in California's version of a competitive market, low-income families will be spending more on their electric bills than they do on rent. This will also have a devastating effect on California's economy. Ultimately, California's economy will affect the national economy as well.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) regulates California utilities. However, generators that participate in interstate trade

¹ Colleen Robinson, *Energy is Power*, Industry Week 17 August 1998:1

² Edgar Browning, *Microeconomic Theory*. (New York; Addison-Wesley, 1999).

³ James Peltz, As deregulation takes hold nationwide, electric utilities remain out of favor, their growth prospects uncertain. Analysts still have a few picks however, Los Angeles Times 20 May 1997: 2.

are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The CPUC froze California's electric rates until 2002⁴. FERC, however, does not regulate the rates at which the generators can sell electricity. In this half-regulated market, California's utilities are forced to sell electricity at a price lower than they bought it. Without pricing freedom, the utilities will be forced to go out of business.

Definition of the Problem:

The economic dilemma in California presents an interesting and perplexing problem to the previously assumed theory that more competition would yield lower rates and a better overall economy. However, when contemplating the issue, another theory falls into place. Deregulation failed in California because it was partial deregulation. Electric generation was deregulated. Electric transmission and distribution were not deregulated due to the vast inefficiency and chaos that numerous sets of electric lines would cause. Instead of focusing on the industry as three elements and deregulating only one part of it, California tried to deregulate the entire industry solely by generation. They forced utilities to sell generators and then opened up the market and claimed deregulation. By doing this, California lost control of the electricity supply. The result was the sale of in-state generators to out-of-state business who answer to FERC and not the CPUC. The electric industry as a whole is a natural monopoly, although the market for generation can be a competitive one. Deregulators in California failed because they did not take these industry phenomena into account.

Scope of the Problem:

Today, resolving the situation seems almost impossible. In 1998, the average cost for one megawatt-hour of electricity was \$12. In June 2000, the price rose as high as \$120 for that same megawatt-hour.

⁴ Peter Navarro, Plug Electric Chord into a Grassy Knoll , Los Angeles Times 6 January 2001: 1

In December of the same year, prices hit \$1,000⁵ per megawatt-hour. Southern California Edison (SCE), Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E) have paid over \$11 billion dollars to purchase electricity, yet they cannot recoup the costs due to the rate freeze imposed by regulators in 1998⁶.

Consumers, too, have suffered. Instead of getting lower prices, rates in San Diego doubled last summer⁷. Rolling blackouts have hit San Francisco, and they are a daily threat to residents of Southern California. Customers that use large amounts of electricity have been turned off repeatedly to protect the rest of the grid. As deregulation continues, the stress on the grid and power lines worsen and electricity is no longer as reliable as it once was⁸. Sophia Mc Donnell, Former Strategic Planning Officer for Southern California Edison, attributes this grid phenomenon to the lack of a safety net. She explained that under regulation, utilities had to supply a certain percentage over what was actually demanded by consumers to ensure adequate electricity, depending on the season. In today's market situation, there is no regulation of electricity production. Generators are able to manipulate the market like a cartel⁹. Since California utilities are now buying power from out-of-state generating companies, money is flowing outside of the state at an alarming rate. FERC is unwilling to temporarily regulate the price at which generators can sell electricity¹⁰. Since there is no longer a single organization that oversees operations, fixing the crisis is proving difficult given competing interests¹¹.

⁵ Betsy Streisand, Lights Out in California, U.S. News and World Report 18 December 2000: 1.

⁶ James Flanagan, Texas is winner on deregulation, The Houston Chronicle 6 January 2001: 1.

⁷ Alex Berenson, California Generating Woes in Deregulation of Electricity, The Toronto Star 6 August 2000:1.

⁸ Patrick Lee, News Analysis: Gearing Up for Grid Shock; Management, Not Money, May Head Off More Woes, Los Angeles Times 14 August 1996

⁹ Navarro, 2.

¹⁰ Streisand, 2.

¹¹ Rebecca Smith, Power Deregulation - A Year Later, The San Francisco Chronicle 31 March 1999: 1.

California's crisis is now beginning to worry the nation. To avert disruptions in the economy due to the possibility of loan defaults by the utilities, the Federal Reserve lowered interest rates in the last week of December¹². Although this might not be sole reason for doing so, the drop in the interest rate indicates that California's electric crisis could indeed tip this nation into a recession if nothing is done. In efforts to help, President Clinton, in his last days of office, initiated a plan to help low income families in the San Diego area afford electricity¹³.

In addition, environmental issues are becoming a concern. There are no longer incentives for energy efficient investments. Right now utilities are looking for electricity at the lowest price. That means purchasing electricity from coal generators outside of California. Small green generators will suffer and go out of business because they cannot compete with the larger firms¹⁴. More pollution equates to an economic bad¹⁵.

With the market in chaos, economists are looking for an answer. Deregulation, for the most part, is a good thing for consumers. In a competitive market, consumers get more bang for their buck, or more quantity of a good for the price. Why, then, are consumers suffering during the deregulation of the electric industry? The answer lies within the basic principles of markets, and supply and demand.

Analysis:

In order to have a competitive market; four conditions must be met.¹⁶ First, there must be a large number of buyers and sellers in the

¹² Flanigan, 2.

¹³ Editorial, 2

¹⁴ David Haldane, Electricity Deregulation Hearing Set. Utilities, Orange County Residents Get a Chance to Hear About Controversial Proposal to Give Customers Option to Shop for their Energy Supplier, Los Angeles Times 1 November 1994: 1

¹⁵ Browning, 52-59

¹⁶ Browning, 203-204

market. When the electric utilities were forced to sell their generators, companies like Enron, a Texas based company and huge contributor to the Bush Campaign, came in and purchased most of the generators held in California and in other areas¹⁷. Although there are close to 500 generation companies in total, only a few companies really control the market¹⁸. In actuality, they constitute an oligopoly and behave as the textbook dominant firm model would suggest¹⁹. The few leading firm or firms are able to select their level of output according to their residual demand curve—the demand left after subtracting other firms' demands from the total demand. They then assume that the other firms will act as competitors and be price takers. In this way, the dominant firm or firms are able to set the price higher than it would be in a competitive solution, or even a regulated monopoly.

The second condition required for a competitive market is free entry and exit. Electric generation in California has been encouraged. However, companies will invest in generation only if the rules of the game are clear. In America, they seldom are²⁰. Businesses are wary to invest in California now that the crisis has become a political issue. Furthermore, in order to enter the market, a company must amass a huge amount of capital. There is not very much market mobility, which in turn limits competition.

Product homogeneity and perfect information are the last two conditions for the competitive market. For the most part, the consumer does not care how the electricity is produced. Some consumers however, prefer green energy to other energy produced from nonrenewable sources like coal. However, since electricity is transferred through a grid, there is no way to direct green energy to green customers and coal energy to coal customers. Therefore, electricity is a fairly homogeneous product. Perfect information is hard to come by in this mar-

¹⁷ Navarro, 1-2.

¹⁸ Navarro, 1

¹⁹ Browning, 340-345

²⁰ Editorial, Charge Ahead, *The Economist* 26 August 2000: 1

ket as prices change often and technology is different depending on the type of generation plant.

It is obvious that the electricity market is not a competitive one. There are few buyers and sellers due to the high cost of entry. Although the product is homogenous for the most part, perfect information is not available. Furthermore, transmission of electricity limits the industry from being fully competitive. Utilities, government and even generators all agree that there can only be one set of transmission and distribution lines. If the transmission element of the electric industry has to be a monopoly, then the industry as a whole cannot fully deregulate. Generators cannot sell directly to the customers; they sell to utilities. Customers are apathetic and only care that electricity gets to their home²¹. To the consumer, electricity is a necessity and a public good.

Supply and demand within the electric industry play a key role in understanding the price hikes within the last year. Electricity is unlike any other market commodity²². It cannot be stored. There is no substitute for it. Natural gas and other forms of energy cannot replace electricity. Therefore, the demand for electricity is relatively inelastic—not very responsive to price changes. Likewise, supply is relatively inelastic²³. It takes years to build a power plant. Once a power plant is operating at full capacity, it cannot produce anymore electricity. The recent price hikes have occurred because of the inelasticity of the demand curve. This situation makes it easy for an oligopoly to control price by simply cutting back on the supply of a good. As discussed previously, the generators within the electric industry are acting like an oligopoly and have the power to control the price if they choose to do so.

²¹ Dan Morain, California; Consumer Groups Oppose Power Bond; Energy: After Taking a No Stance on Legislation Passed Last Year, They Now Say Rate-payers will be the Big Losers, Los Angeles Times 3 July 1997: 1.

²² Smith, 1.

²³ Alex Berenson, California on Edge of Failing to Meet Electricity Needs, New York Times 3 August 2000:2.

After looking at all of these market elements a new question emerges. Why would anyone want to deregulate? Just like anything else, change opens up new opportunities. In 1997, the price of electricity in California was almost 50% higher than the rest of the nation²⁴. Big businesses wanted to negotiate the price of electricity and under the monopoly that was not allowed. The CPUC proposed the deregulation in 1994 in response to price concerns and business loved the idea. Utilities, too, became involved. According to McDonnell, there is some dispute as to whether the utilities were forced into deregulation. Some people believe that utilities wanted deregulation as well. Regardless of that, deregulation seemed a sure thing. SCE, SDG&E, and PG&E all helped to write the legislation with the help of Steve Peace and others. They wanted to ensure that they would get compensation for investments that they were forced to make under the regulated monopolies²⁵. They were allowed to recover stranded asset returns. At the same time, they had to sell all of their generators. Utilities were happy to do this because under regulation, generating was not profitable.

Businessmen out-of-state saw dollar signs in deregulation and soon bought up most generators owned by the utility companies. The sales from generation were much better than expected²⁶. California's goal was to get deregulation running and worry about making competitive later²⁷. This would prove to be a tragic mistake as an electric oligopoly soon emerged. California lost control of the electricity market because generators were operating from different states.

Today, the market is divided into two parts. The market for generation is an oligopoly. The market for transmission is a monopoly. Within generation, the few large firms operate like oligopolists within the

²⁴ James Sweeney, Electric Deregulation Sparks Some Doubts; Consumer Groups Wage an 1 lth-Hour Battle, San Diego Union-Tribune 10 August 1997: 1.

²⁵ Sweeney, 2.

²⁶ Rebecca Smith, PG&E 's Profit Jumps, Beats Expectations, San Francisco Chronicle 21 January 1999: 1.

²⁷ Smith, 1.

dominant-firm model. They use a residual demand curve, which accounts for what they can sell after they take the other firms' output into consideration. They do this by assuming the other firms are acting as competitors and are willing to accept the price given to them. Therefore, their output can be determined from the supply curve because they collectively behave as a competitive industry²⁸. The dominant firm also knows its marginal revenue and marginal cost curves. Therefore, it will simply maximize profits by producing where marginal revenue equals marginal cost. In this market situation, the generators are able to charge higher prices due to their ability to take advantage of the residual demand curve through collusion.

Within transmission, the utilities operate as regulated monopolies. The individual utility wants to maximize its profits by producing where marginal revenue equals marginal cost. Under a true monopoly, the utility would charge higher rates than are allowed under the current system. Now, there is a price ceiling imposed on the market which sets rates to what they would be under a competitive market, and consumers pay the competitive rate for electricity. The utilities pay a price higher than their marginal revenue for electricity. Deregulators failed to realize that the marginal cost of producing electricity would increase due to the formation of the oligopoly. Under deregulation, consumer prices were frozen until 2002. In this situation, the utility is losing money on every unit they sell²⁹.

Solutions:

It is obvious that something needs to be done. Practically speaking, transmission must stay as a monopoly. Also, California cannot re-regulate. Generators are making huge profits and are not willing to sell back their generation plants. FERC, headed by President Bush, is unwilling to force generators to temporarily reduce rates to Califor-

²⁸ Browning, 243.

²⁹ Browning, 299

nia³⁰. The CPUC can only regulate businesses operating in California and if they regulate California generators it will only make a small impact.

California Governor Gray Davis met with state and national officials in January 2001 in hopes of dealing with the energy crisis in California³¹. They hoped to develop long-term contracts with generators in order to keep prices down. Davis has also pushed legislation through congress to temporarily relieve utilities of their financial burden by purchasing electricity from generators and then selling it to utilities at discounted prices. Davis' budget includes \$1 billion dollars for building new power plants and promoting energy conservation³². With negotiations and investment, they hope to save California from an economic disaster.

While Gray Davis' plans are good ones, they still do not address the entire problem. California did not deregulate its electricity market; it restructured it³³. California allowed the generating oligopoly to form. California lost control of regulating the electric industry when out-of-state companies were allowed to purchase generators owned by the California utilities. FERC now regulates the supply of electricity, doing so with a political agenda in mind. California needs to recapture the market in order to regain control of the supply of electricity.

Gray Davis and the California executive branch needs to acquire all remaining generators within the state of California. Davis also needs to expand the authority of the governor and act under the state of emergency clause and seize all other generators within the state of California that are not willing to sell electricity at the competitive

³⁰ Streisand, 2.

³¹ Associated Press, No Solution Reached in California Electricity Talks, The Wall Street Journal 10 January 2001:2. # Reuter Limited, Davis Sets Strategy for Energy Crisis, The Wall Street Journal 8 January 2001:1.

³² Adrian Moore, Phony Deregulation, Reason November 2000:1.

³³ Reuters, 2.

rate³⁴. The state can then effectively reduce the price in the market by selling to the utilities at the competitive rate. This will force the out-of-state generators to cut prices in order to compete, and will debilitate the generating oligopoly. Although there is no firm evidence of a cartel or tacit collusion, this plan will eradicate that possibility.

Conclusion:

The problem with California's deregulation policy is that it did not fully deregulate the generation market. California forgot to ensure real competition. By doing this, regulators allowed out-of-state generation companies to hold California power consumers hostage. They lost control of the market during its transition and are now forcing Californians to pay the price. Re-regulation is not an option. California needs to take control of its economy by some supply-side economics. By controlling the supply and price of electricity temporarily, California can ensure the competition and reliability of electricity. Slowly it can sell off the state generators to various buyers, keeping the market competitive. FERC will eventually have to become less political as more and more states deregulate. Eventually, the nation will be able to buy and sell electricity in a competitive market. Consumers, however, will continue to get a bill from the same utility. The price to the consumer may be higher than usual at first but will drop after establishing competition. Public safety will no longer be in jeopardy and California's energy crisis will be over.

Epilogue:

After this paper was submitted, the Los Angeles Times confirmed evidence of the existence of tacit collusion within the market of electric energy generation. This evidence strongly supports the above theory.

³⁴ Plug Electric Chord into a Grassy Knoll, Los Angeles Times 26 January 2001: Betsy Streisand, 124.

A Fallen Star

By Brenda Trejo

In a tiny room of the Norton Simon museum a 16th century Italian painter has frozen time. The earth colored walls are overtaken by the size of his 15x25 foot tapestries, and the viewer succumbs to the weight of their visual story, Dido's doomed love. They are Romanelli's rendition of scenes in Virgil's Aeneid. Only four of the six tapestries are on display. Yet each carefully narrates important scenes of Dido and Aeneas' love story. These tapestries will forever remind us (as long as preserved) that Dido is a fallen star.

Two stars collide. Dido and Aeneas lead separate lives, unaware of each other. Each shines in his /her own way. She is queen of Carthage, protector of her people and a devoted wife, mourning a dead husband. He is an ex-Trojan warrior destined for greatness, to be the founder of Rome. Dido and Aeneas meet. They fall in love. The gods desire they come together. During a hunt in a forest, Juno conjures a storm and in the mayhem, Dido and Aeneas find shelter in a cave. Alone, they unite in a unique marriage. Dido becomes "Aeneas' very own." Love is unity.

Romanelli interprets this scene with Dido as a light-skinned young woman, with rose tinted cheeks and pale yellow hair. She wears a flowing blue dress and emanates a young fresh innocence. She is vulnerable. Positioned in the far right of the canvas, she stands in front of the cave's entrance. Her head tilts to the left, looking at Aeneas with wonder and excitement. Aeneas is equally beautiful. He has golden hair and a strong muscular build. He is a warrior, and we see this through the armor he wears. On his right hip hangs a sword with an eagle head. Aeneas protects Dido, covering her from the ensuing rain with his red cloak. He holds it above her head, enveloping her with his strong arms. Though Romanelli paints both lovers equal in size, Aeneas appears the stronger one in this scene. Encircling each other, they appear lost in each other's existence, separate from the world within the tapestry. The hunters are visible in the left background, scattering away with the horses. Two cupids, sent by Juno and Venus, hover in the sky. They hide behind gray

clouds, looking down on Dido and Aeneas, who are about to enter the cave. The smiling cupids appear happy. Their artificial storm has succeeded in seducing Dido and Aeneas. An owl sits on a tree branch, barely visible, just above Dido and Aeneas. This owl symbolizes the doom to come.

Have you ever experienced an ecstasy so great you literally wished the world would stop so that feeling could last forever? Have you ever experienced joy so great that it seemed the world stopped for a second? Love is an emotion so powerful it can sometimes distort a person's perception of time. Have you ever had a desire so strong that it takes over your every waking thought? When you consummate this passion it literally brings a mental and physical sense of relief. Time seems to slow down a few seconds when this desire is fulfilled. Indeed a fulfilled love is strong enough to give a false sense of total fulfillment. At such moments you feel you're complete and that if you were to die, you would die happy, knowing you acquired what you most desired.

Romanelli stops Dido's moment of ecstasy. He paints her showing Aeneas her plans for Carthage. Romanelli paints Dido in the center of the tapestry so the viewer's eye is directed to her. She holds the plans for the city in her hands, but her face is transfixed in a lovesick gaze on Aeneas. Aeneas stands to the left, and his gaze is fixed on the plans. Aeneas looks strong and regal, stands upright, fully clad in his armor. He does not gaze at Dido the way she looks at him, as in a state of drunken ecstasy. His face is stern, and it almost appears as if he is angry. Perhaps the plans Dido holds for the strengthening of her own city remind Aeneas of his own lost city. Aeneas may be thinking about what he originally set out to do in his voyage: to found a new city, Rome. Aeneas has been chosen by the gods to found the city of Rome. This is his destiny. Aeneas is the brighter star between the two, for he is to be the father of one of the greatest cities. And we know from history that Carthage will fall victim to Rome's great power. Aeneas does not fall victim to obsessive love. A love desired and fulfilled is not enough to give him a sense of completeness the way it does for Dido. Dido is lost in her love for Aeneas, her light will soon die out. Dido does not comprehend Aeneas.

Her inability to understand his desire to explore and find a new city, and ultimately his own fulfillment, will turn her love for him into hatred. Love is strife.

If Dido understood Aeneas, perhaps she would not have sought vengeance against him by committing suicide. Why didn't she look into herself and reflect the nature of her lover for him? She shows signs of an attempt in the beginning of book IV when she converses with her sister Anna. Dido asks herself what is it about Aeneas that tempts her. Dido has been mourning the shadow of her former husband Sychaeus, but then Aeneas comes along and disrupts this peaceful state. *Aeneas moves Dido*. He awakens her eyes. These are the qualities that make Aeneas shine: his external beauty, strength, bravery in war, and dedication for his Trojan warriors. Sychaeus' memory is overshadowed by the Aeneas' brightness. But Dido didn't see it was this shine that drove Aeneas away from her. Dido goes through withdrawal when Aeneas leaves. Her body and mind cannot accept his departure. Dido is a fading star.

Dido kills herself. Romanelli paints Dido at the moment she thrust Aeneas' eagle-headed sword into her chest. Dido is in a messy state. Her hair is now disheveled. Her dress is half open, revealing one of her breasts. Romanelli does not show Dido alone. Dido's servants surround her. Anna desperately climbs onto the bed and pyre Dido has built. Above Dido hovers the goddess Isis, who cuts one of her locks, to release her soul into the afterlife. To the right of the tapestry is an opening. The window shows Aeneas' ships sailing away. Two men point to them, at the same time pointing to Dido lying on the bed. Dido wears an expression of misery. She is, at that moment, just about to enter death, abandoning her people, her city, just as Aeneas abandons her. Dido's sense of completeness with Aeneas' love is gone. She cannot hold him to her. Dido's meeting with Aeneas has not been successful. Her love for him has been her undoing. The doom prophesized by the symbolic owl in the earlier tapestry has come to fruition.

Sometimes smaller stars are consumed by neighboring larger ones, the smaller star succumbing to the larger star's forces. The smaller star simply is not strong enough and comes too close to the

larger star. Both have been united although only one is visible: the large one. The smaller star is not dead. It has now become part of the larger star's entity, and will continue existing through its orbit. Dido should have accepted from the beginning of their relationship that she was like the smaller star. She could have become part of Aeneas' larger existence. She could have supported his expedition. Aeneas was Dido's bright star. Dido instead decides to fight him and fades away. She dies unknowing that Aeneas mourns her shadow. Dido is loved and remembered by Aeneas. In this way Dido has become a part of Aeneas. Here she will continue existing, as a memory in him and in Romanelli's tapestries.



Untitled, 1999 by Robin Judd

Awards

Freshman Writing Competition: First Place

A Chaotic Ballet

by Justin Jimenez

How do you write about writing? It feels like it might turn into one of those never ending thought trains about how large the galaxy is, when the galaxy is never ending. Is there really a method to my madness? Can there actually be conformity mixed with chaos? Whether I want to accept it or not, there must be a logical thought process to my papers. Taking a paper step by step is the only possible way to see blueprints scattered in my head.

Denial is always the very first step in the construction of my paper. It started from the moment it was assigned. I was superficially convinced it would be easy. Once I sat down I was sure it would be a breeze. By setting aside a time that would be rescheduled four or five times, I would just prolong the inevitable but traditional mental blow up the night before it is due. It is not until mid Sunday night, that the threat of the due date would be real enough to provoke me to actually sit down.

Breathe — a vital step in my writing. “Don’t let it intimidate you.” I instinctively tell myself while starting the body of the paper. The process is vague, but also natural. I just have to do what I normally do and it will come together. I have thought of the content of this paper all week; surely something should be here by now. I turned the computer on two days ago and I got two paragraphs out of it. I turned it on two hours ago and got nothing done. Now three hours. Still nothing but a sentence telling the time that has passed. I’m not even a quarter done with it, and this paper is driving me up the wall. I must breathe: my only immediate answer to the problem at hand. I have to breathe so I can sink into my chair far enough to accept the fact that I will be sitting here for at least another two hours.

Don’t hate it. If I keep fighting, this monster of a project will

never get done. I must stop hating this idea of writing a paper about what I am writing. Like acting, even if a part or a character is unlikable, I am forced to put away my own judgements and actually find a purpose in the person. In order to make this paper successful, I am forced give a part of myself. I have to like what I'm writing. I have to build a relationship with the paper. The more negative I find in it, the further distance it puts between us.

I question myself on why I like to write. If writing is so enjoyable to me, then why would writing about the process terrify me so much? Possibly by blueprinting my own system, I can become more critical of my own writing, and in turn become a better writer. A connection is formed: I have found my link into the paper. I'm writing this because I want to become a better writer. I want to become a better writer because I like writing. The relationship has started. I have calmed down... a little.

Concentrate — essential to the coherent content of the essay. My attention is falling. All out war is declared, as I battle the urge to pick up the phone. I am constantly whipping my hand back from the mouse as I attempt to check my e-mail. I know I have already eaten; I do not need to go to the vending machines. I have actually started my paper, yet I am still not far enough to make it comfortable. Forecasting a late night, I prepared early with a two liter-bottle of coke. I'm here for the long haul. I must take control of my train of thought and get past this purgatory point in my writing. I'm not far enough to relax, but rather at the top of a long hill. If I can get over this mind-made lump, then the journey down might actually be enjoyable. I look at the screen, lock my door and refocus. I want to sleep tonight; this paper will be done.

Music — the only thing that can ease my caffeine-induced anxiety. Knowing my procrastination habits, I planted a pre-selected MPS song list on my computer. This prevents me from scrounging the Internet in search of inspiring song. The songs range from Billy Joel to Buddy Holly. I have purposely picked the upbeat older songs in hope to lift my spirits in my time of emotional need. I stay away from the new pop songs. I fear they will only inspire me to give into my craving of socializing with my peers. Medium volume is perfect.

It is loud enough to keep my attention, but low enough to keep me from dancing around my room: another subconscious procrastination technique. Eased by the sounds and reassured by the visual size of my paper on screen, my confidence rises.

Back to ground zero. A moment ago my paper was coming together, and now I'm drawing a blank. Top to bottom: like a nauseating roller coaster, I can't seem to find my groove. I spent my outline with the last paragraph. Even as vague as it was, I thought it would at least get me past here, or at least to a point where I would have some motivation.

Frustration — expected but never welcomed. I'm stuck and have already exhausted my bs-ing. My back hurts, I want to be doing something else, and I have to go to the bathroom. Remember step two: breathe. Taking a controlled bathroom break can often give way to rekindling my writing spirit. Rejuvenated by a stretch and a swig of coke, I find myself inspired but still clueless. I re-read my paper in hope to discover where and why this paper is going where it has gone. From there I can only pray for the continuation of my thoughts to be rational enough to put on paper.

Here we go. It actually wasn't that bad. My confidence is back up. I am a good writer. I can write this paper. It will get done tonight. I will sleep, and I will pass this class. No worries. I know how to do this stuff; I've written a paper before. I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and gosh darn it people like me. I will beat this paper.

No rough draft for this doozy or any other essay. Drafts just exhaust good spontaneous thoughts. Go for it in one sweep. If the paper is good enough, or if the writer is good enough, the paper should just lead the way. The outcome is all or nothing. Either the paper will be a marvelous creation and even the writer won't understand how it got there, or it will be pushed away and scribbled with pencil only to be re-written. Unfortunately, being an artist I am unable to constructively judge my own work. I will always have my own opinion, but all that matters is the opinion of the audience. Again, relating theater to writing, as an actor I might have felt wonderful about a performance, be totally convinced that I was the moment,

and that I delivered a solid character. However, if the audience hated it, then what I think is irrelevant. As an actor you perform to the audience; as a writer you write to an audience. Preparation and attempted perfection are present with every showing. In the end, both arts leave the success of their work in the hands of others. Fickle and harsh, it is the praise and fear of failure from the audience that keeps us creating. Therefore it is a waste of time and precious thought to concern myself with judging my own work.

This is often the period in my paper where I am stuck with a mild case of amnesia. Where am I? Where am I going with this paper? The best remedy is to re-read the assignment write about the writing process. The repetition is driving me insane. At this point I really have to analyze about what my writing process is about.

Now, four hours into the paper, I know I am close to the end as I feel one of the final steps coming on: doubt. Have I just now begun to answer the assigned question? Have I been defining my style at all through this paper, or am I just rambling? It reads like just a random grocery list describing my thoughts. Chaos in control. I don't understand how these words get on the paper. My feelings turn into thoughts, my thoughts into ideas, my ideas into sentences, and eventually sentences into paragraphs. This fear of absent-mindedness always hits late in the paper. The lack of sleep has caused a delusional sense of failure. The paper number at the far left hand corner of my screen is the only concrete indicator that I have been doing any work. Somewhere in my soggy, exhausted, Coca-Cola fueled mind, I know that there is something out there. Although I cannot see it, I have faith that my paper says something.

It takes a short nap and a bike ride to make me see it. This whole time the answer to my question has been so close I could have tripped over it. That feeling, this instinctual writing, is my process. While I was unsure of what was going on, all the words behind were leading up to this one. It makes sense how I got here. Confusing and bizarre, my writing process is creatively predictable. It is like a messy desk, but one where the owner knows exactly where everything is. On the surface it is rough and unorganized, but with a closer look it has a unique sense of order. The doubt, the

confidence, the cockiness, the frustration: as random as they appear, all are a very choreographed part of my writing world. I approach the end and realize that this is what happens every time I write a paper. I hate it, I love it, I like it, I want to throw it away: it's the best, it's the worst: the never ending battle with the keyboard is my way of constructing a paper. The constant dissatisfaction I have with the work is why I enjoy it so much. It is the same way I approach life: if it is complete, then we are done.

Newsom Awards 2001: Poetry

First Place —Kristine Welter

Lucky

When I think of my dad
vasectomized
sometime in 1983,
I often wonder if he feels like less
of a man and maybe more like
my dog as they sit
bonding with plastic lampshade collars,
leashed to the kitchen table, exiled
from the white carpet of the bedroom.

And I wonder just how did
those doctors get in there?
Shiny scalpel, shinier under
bright lights, against shaven flesh.
Snippety snip,
quickly tied up like two wet shoelaces.
Double-knotted.

I wonder if it's written
V A S E C T O M Y
Across the top of his medical records, or better yet,
under the tiles of his address.
Everyone snickers as he hobbles by.

I can't help but think of cherries:
bitten into, pitted, and placed
back in a bowl on the counter,
deliciously collecting dust, uneaten.

When I think of my dad since 1983
I think, yeah, I am
lucky, just barely making it in under
the wire, before the balloons were
deflated, before She got
selfish, before, maybe, he felt like
less of a man, watching
dandelions disintegrating,
replicating, released by only a
soft hand and a light blow.

Second Place—April Garbat

Wenham, MA

From this place of creamy birches
that drip pink skin
or golden leaves
snakes slither through to
brown fall-leaf stained water,
grey water
grey sky—
where the ocean kisses the sky with fog
and mist brushes her cool ghostly
 fingers across my cheek,
and lingers soothingly, a lace shawl,
or eerily across a moonlit green—
from this place of creamy birches
that haunt grey woods like spectres:
the farmers who dragged stone walls
to stumble over hills and sink
hidden by moss, by loam, by bark—
from this place of paper white soft birches
of spongy wood scarred grey and black
 by each branch-span's growth—
from
this place
of white birches.

Third Place—Lisa Ayre-Smith

A Lower Case

it's the new
fashion
in poetry
to write
only in lower case
--with dashes
using
different line lengths
and rambling long sentences
broken off in
weird
random places
to pause
it gives the illusion of a passing thought
of the writer fading from
central focus
it's trendy to disappear
in lower case
(and to use parentheses)
and not to rhyme
(most of the time)
i have to start all lines with
i, lower case
this poetry is so personal
or perhaps postmodern
now for some carefully chosen
self-conscious
non-frilly but maybe silly
language
images
--if it doesn't fit

then it fits you know--
languid dizzy streams
(two adjectives no comma no punctuation)
--of ruby pearls
fall
--one word for dramatic
effect
glide down the silver, the flesh
i'm slitting my wrists
because
i've just written
a poem
like that
(no period)



You're lousy, don't call me, 2000 by Brenda Trejo

Newsom Awards 2001: Fiction

First Place

Plucked

by Kristine Welter

I was not supposed to eat strawberries. At least that is what my mother told me when I was a child. Only the sinful ate strawberries and I was forbidden to even say that luscious word or walk near them in the market. But of course this only made me crave them more as we always want what we think we cannot have. Out of my mother's presence, I would stare at the petite body of bound flesh, counting every ripe seed and sensing the unexplored, prickly warmth of desire cloaked in scarlet. As if they belonged to me; as if they needed my help. They did belong to me. I needed them. Of course I did not know this yet and in reverence of my deranged mother, but more of my ripening libido, I stayed away for a time. For a time.

I was eighteen and easily seduced by an older man carrying a batch of strawberries. They were still moist from his hot breath and sensual words, from the humidity of Tifton, Georgia – an unlikely vacationing spot, a better place for fried chicken and company picnics. Sugary grains melting in my mouth, piece by piece, coming undone. And this is how I came to know Marco and his four-year old chihuahua who liked to watch as we ate strawberries off each other, from each other. With each other, we plated. Marco, a thirty-two-year old construction worker who was going no where but down my pants and that was fine with me.



As he was convinced that I needed a break from school, my father took me along on his business trip. Most parents would take

their kids with them if they had a convention in Seattle or Orlando – my father took me to Tifton, Georgia. Alone, I was left to explore the town. It took me an hour on the first day. I walked down Main Street (so cleverly named) lined with decrepit blue and gray buildings threatened by the slight breeze that blew my hair across my eyes, sticking to the sweat that beaded on my pale skin. Churches were conveniently placed between shoe stores and pawnshops, the barber and a diner. I had seen at least six churches on my right hand side of the street, politely declining fliers handed out by those preaching the wrath of the Devil, reminding me of my mother. Reminding me that I was alone in a town deep in in the Bible Belt of America.

My father knew it was a break from normalcy that I needed most. As her only child, my mother felt it was her duty to make me the best person she could. She wanted to make me just like her, as most of them do. But at eighteen, I was tired of piano lessons, pig tails, and charity fashion shows. I was tired of never being able to stay out past ten o'clock, of everyone at school laughing at me. They all knew her and what she was trying to do to our cozy community. No one minded that we weren't required to wear uniforms at school, no one minded that the Smiths parked their boat on the street, that a strip mall was going up around the corner. No one but my mother. Needless to say, she rarely got very far, upsetting her even further. This doesn't mean that her dedication wasn't admirable. As I watched her meticulously scrub the dishes after dinner, I wondered how she had time for it all, knowing that I would never catch her resting. Knowing that she was always tired.

She was much more conservative than my father, and though *he* was the minister, she preached God's word with unrivaled passion. This came as a slight threat to me as I was hardly looking for support from an uncertain God, and therefore, I shied away from my mother-turn-missionary. I told her that I needed to know myself before I could commit; there had to be more than a mere promise of protection. To me, there was nothing more than a set of rules upon which I was not ready to live, though she consistently worked to enforce them anyway. Do not be greedy, honey. Do not lie, honey. And definitely no strawberries. There was something about a reac-

tion I had when I was a child. My mother told me that I blew up like a red birthday balloon; at least that's how she explained it then. Afraid of my allergy and of her wrath, I stayed away for a while. And when I asked her to tell me the story again, the seven years in between seemed to have blurred her recollection of what happened. Emotion took over, and my mother refused to let me in on the secret. She told me that I wouldn't understand: I was too young. Still afraid of her strong feelings against the fruit, as though it was straight from Eden, I forbade myself to even say the word. I guess my mother did raise a good child and I loved her for trying to save me.

But with this protection came inexperience and curiosity, on the edge of rebellion but unable to jump off the swing and into the real world, into the sack, as the girls at school would say. Books and educational videos, what those girls spoke of at the lunch table next to me, was all I knew of *Them*. Boxers or briefs? Did he use his tongue, go up your shirt, down your pants? Ooh. I sat alone, face exploding with the late onset of puberty, split hairs making my round face even rounder – and thought of my mother.

So as I was now surrounded by churches and flapping Southern pride hanging from deteriorating porches, this getaway to Tifton, Georgia suddenly seemed more like an intentional reminder of all that compelled my mother to act in “my best interest.” It was supposed to be a vacation from what had made me want to escape in the first place.

I was forced to eat at the Red Lobster, feeling my arteries thicken at the thought of dining anywhere else. And as I sat there, looking out the window, bored, I was sure that I had it all figured out. The entire social structure of the South lay in the number of drainage pipes under each driveway: two for the wealthy, one for the majority. Rusted playground equipment scattered from yards; hay bales were caught under abandoned swings. In four hours the beige-ness of the town overtook me, and I felt like a strong wind would knock me down. Either the wind or the glares of the citizens of Tifton, particularly the owner of the small market I wandered into. I'm sure I looked strange to them, my lip-gloss reflecting the red of the large apples onto my white dress. With their current KMart fashions and the odor

of jealousy pouring out from their armpits, I was slightly uncomfortable.

To make it out alive, I decided that I had no choice but to become one of them. And when I met Marco, I didn't really mind.

It was while I was in that same market, half looking at the produce, half looking over my shoulder. Withdrawing from the hot sun and the even hotter breeze, I entered the refreshing shade of the tent, nearly plowing over a fresh mound of strawberries. I quickly diverted my step – again, the influence of my mother – and moved up the aisle past the plums, pomegranates, and dried fruit. But somehow I ended up back at those strawberries, now facing the street and a man who clearly did not belong in Tifton. Dressed in a ribbed cotton tank and tight jeans tanned with age, his fiery muscles burned right through the clothing. Out from the edge of his shirt crept an immortal snake, branded into his dark skin. His face shone with a fierce energy, permanently tinted a shade of red. Black singed up the sides, blending the aging stubble deep into his skin. As he walked towards the market, my stare caught his attention, and his smile became a sufficient invitation to join him. Instead, blood moved through my face and out to my ears, stopping me there with my head pulled down towards the ground in embarrassment. Walking past my frozen body, he grabbed a batch of strawberries, dripping juice into the hay shuffled below our feet. Through the hay he slithered, his scent mixing with the sweet perfume of the strawberries, tickling my nose, tempting my morals. I grabbed any apple to my left and followed him to the register, hoping to walk away with more than I paid for.

"Captivating," he commented in my direction, eyeing a solitary ripe berry placed carefully in the palm of his hand. The distinct crease running through the middle of his palm continued up and around the beaded skin of the strawberry, curving back down to meet the rest. He looked at the strawberry, as though it needed him, an escape; as though it wanted to be taken, savored, and enjoyed. Anticipating a response that turned out empty, he finally extended the supple flesh towards me. Something crawled in my stomach. It was my mother and her obsession. It was the threat of my allergy. It

was anxiety and pressure and desire bound in one petite, succulent corpse, restrained, luring me through the spaces between his fingers. I shook my head at his attempt. "You don't like strawberries?" he asked, shocked.

"I don't know. I've never had one." Afraid of sounding young and turning him away, I quickly cleared my throat.

"You're missing out." He left me with that, continuing to eye me as he walked back to his truck. I followed him, a few steps behind, of course, assuming he knew I was there but could care less. He slid into the seat and shut the door, immediately laying his arm out the window, gripping a cigarette. I watched the dark figure of his other hand lead a berry to his mouth. He threw the stem out the window and observed my reaction from his side mirror. Alone and empowered by boredom and feigned independence, I eased my way to his face in the window and told him of my allergy, and of my interest. Dropping the apple, I extended my hand – gripping *get me out of here* – in a formal introduction, which soon turned into a formal invitation for a short tour around town. With more perspiration than hesitation, I joined him. After we had made a complete circle and pulled to a stop along side City Hall, he of course asked me where I wanted to be dropped off and then quickly added that if I'd like to meet his dog, or have some lunch, I was welcome. And then in a way that I cannot explain, as if I had been hypnotized by the hum of his engine or the whirl of his voice, completely absorbed in his every move, we ended up at his house, separated only by a tray of strawberries sweating right along with us.

I had now really seen all of Tifton, Georgia including the trailer park, more like manufactured homes I guess, where Marco lived alone. Only one drainage pipe held up his driveway but it didn't bother me. His yipping companion met us at the door and jumped at the smell of the strawberries, a temptation he obviously knew well. It was something that Lucy, Marco's chihuahua, and I would come to have in common. It had been those strawberries that captivated me in the first place. The temptation had always lingered, and in a place like Tifton, Georgia on a day like that day, strawberries seemed like a good idea. And again, I declined.

Marco and I sat at the splintered kitchen table where, rubbing my fingers over the jagged grain, I nervously asked him about his life. He flinched at my directness and, though careful to represent himself truthfully, he answered all at once: "Lots of meat. No strings attached. Cuban citizenship. Construction. No, I just don't really have the motivation to go back. I am pretty happy here. Simple." There was sincerity in his words, in the way his hands unconsciously mimicked mine on his side of the table, and I knew he wanted to say more. But there was nothing left.

So it was my turn and I was prepared with a number of lies. I guess it was all fake anyway, every word out of my mouth: "Visiting colleges. Transferring. Business major with corporate plans for the future." Even the truth seemed to be wrong including Palatine, my Chicago-land suburb (588-23hundred, Empire), my mother and the excuses she made. I knew she would disapprove of my choice to be here now and of Marco's choices, first scolding my ignorance and then patiently trying to explain God's path for his type, straight to hell. And I, for being accepting and understanding, open-minded and mostly curious – I was hot on his trail.

During silence, he moved to the kitchen sink, carefully bathed the berries and when he finished, tried to convince me again. Small beads rolling off the strawberry and down his forearm, chasing the veins of his masculine arms, curiosity swallowed my mother's words, lodged somewhere at the back of my throat. I hesitantly nodded in submission as he slowly brought the strawberry to my nose, allowing me to breathe its syrupy fragrance, then circled it down to the surface of my moist lips where he held it for a moment. My craving grew. Sensing my urge to devour it, he pulled away. "Very slowly," he whispered, his mouth almost as close to mine as the berry. Bringing the strawberry back to my open mouth, I closed my eyes, as if I were being kissed for the first time, and cautiously welcomed its touch with my extended tongue. Feeling it inside my mouth, thoughts of my allergy and my mother's secret flowed out with one last sigh before I bit down. I bit down into the ripe fruit, moved it around in my mouth, and felt its warmth slide down my throat. I opened my eyes to Marco, standing there, almost equally involved in the moment.

My face did not swell; the ground did not shake. I took one more bite, finishing the strawberry, and reached for another.

Clearly, there was nothing wrong with strawberries. From the table to the couch, from the couch to the bed ... we took a moment to straighten the sheets, while I knew that they would again be knotted around out wreathing bodies. Something about the strawberries heightened my senses, increased my knowledge. Something about the strawberries would come to expand my experience as a mere eighteen-year old.

But it was my mother's fault, I was now convinced, and Marco seemed to agree. I told him the story, swallowing another cool bite of a single sin wrapped in the hue of the Devil, carrying an aroma that only He could send forth from below. I was seduced. I finally found something behind the churches, behind the funny looks, away from the reminder of my mother. I silently thanked my father for bringing me here while Marco took another strawberry from the tray and delivered it to my mouth. As he studied my body with his eyes, I allowed my sticky hands to explore, fingers skipping from his chest, over his stomach, around to the left, down his groin, teasing his pimpled skin and retreating back up the right before I got too involved. He didn't flinch. We lay there in our underwear until I told him that I needed to get back. We had finished the strawberries hours before.

I met my father back at the hotel for dinner, the taste of desire lingering on my tongue and a single strawberry seed wedged in the slight gap between my front teeth. Exhausted, he didn't seem to notice. He handed me a couple dollars to get me through the following day and went to bed.

Marco picked me up from the hotel the next morning. As we drove down Main, the woman handing out fliers recognized me and shot a disapproving look which made it through the glare of my window but no further.

And when we got to his house, the talking stopped. There wasn't really much else to say. He lay there on top of my nude body, smothering my pure mind with chest hair and sweat, hip bones digging through the insides of my legs. I didn't think he would do it. His

lips moving from my breasts to my neck, to my mouth, I felt him grow hard against me. Against the thin cotton of my panties he continued to plunge softly, followed by moments of aggression before my quiet moans of discomfort returned the calm. His hands moved down around my waist, clutched the material of chastity and continued to pull them down with his undulant rhythm. And before I could warn him of my virginity, of my naivete, before I could clear my mother's voice from my head, he entered me. While almost everything about it felt wrong – aggressive grunts took his lips from mine, the ceiling light shadowed his expressionless face above me – something about it felt very right. Maybe it was knowing Lucy was watching. Maybe it was the strawberries still sitting on the counter, untouched while it was me that he wanted to indulge in. He took me, savored and enjoyed me. And this is how I came to know the true evil my mother spoke of. She must have known the games that are played, the corruption transferred to a seemingly innocent strawberry when recently plucked from the patch.

My father didn't notice the cringes of discomfort I poorly held back at dinner that night. He led a prayer thanking God for allowing us to be together, and I asked that God heal me, making me better by morning. My early retreat from dinner and smothered tears were not enough to draw attention: only He would know of the sins committed. That night I lay awake, my insides scorched with no sign of recovery. Everything I had known was torn from me, and each time I turned restlessly, lying there across the room from my father, I feared that I would reopen the wound, blood staining my legs. Carefully inching across the starched carpet, I made it safely onto the balcony, beating the sun to the cool air, the first nice breeze I had felt since O'Hare and I looked to the sky in praise. I sat down, put my feet over the railing, and spread my legs, allowing the crisp air of goodness to flow through me. It was a glorious feeling.

Marco picked me up from the hotel early the third morning, a batch of strawberries awaiting my arrival. I looked at him and smiled with that knowledge which I spoke of before; the increased knowledge somehow bought at the market that day. Stumbling through the door, we undressed each other, ourselves, the quickest way to

nudity, to perversity, to hell. The strawberries flew across the bed, the sheets already stained red from our last escapade. I had forgotten the throbbing between my legs that kept me up the night before. The temptation overtook me as I lay down for him again, sweat curling the short hairs at the base of my ponytail, a slight breeze purely from the momentum cooled the moisture that crept down and around the inside of my thighs. Together our bodies slurped, and if I hadn't been so caught up in the moment, smothered by the heat escaping from the creases around his eyes, I would have surely laughed. He held me tightly in his large arms, his chest against mine, his mouth sucking the air from my lungs as if there would never be enough.

Few strawberries, and even fewer days left in Tifton, I savored what I was given, fondling it between my tongue and his, hesitant to bite down, knowing I would have no choice but to swallow and eventually forget. Selfishly, he stole the berry from my mouth and finished it. I opened my eyes, already feeling hungry without, blaming my mother for creating the craving in the first place. I found him at my feet. Slowly moving from my toes, to the top of my knee, up to my belly button, continuing upward against my ripe flesh, a surprise in hand. He teased the rounds of my breasts with the cold body of the strawberry, circling my nipples, through the wide canal of cleavage, across my clavicle, towards my mouth, and retreated back to my waist, leaving me open but not unsatisfied. Leaving me with an empty stomach and a greedy tongue.

The next day, I left Tifton, Georgia. We said goodbye and he handed me a batch of strawberries and one last fuck.



The conference was over and so was my knowledge of Marco and the crimson town in which he dwelled. But that was all right with me because this is how I met Shane, as I picked strawberries in the market back in Palatine, Illinois. He stood next to me testing melons. Big hands, a firm grip. He looked at me and said "Don't you know? Strawberries are for the Devil." So I asked him to come over. Ravenous, I showed him what I had learned from that sturdy, sloppy

man with incredible endurance and a real way about himself. What I had only discovered a week and a half before. Of course I made my own carnal revisions, an expert-come-whore at eighteen. Who needed strawberries? They were just a pick-up line, an open door. They sat on the counter, starving for attention, while we ate each other. Gluttonous. And this is how I came to be with Shane, bringing home melons and an appetite unparalleled.

Second Place:

Preface to the Third Edition

by James Adomian

March, 2001

Since the first publication of *A Rational Critique of Irrational Subjectivity*, I have updated the text when time permitted, in keeping with advancements in the field of pre-post-postmodern dysfunctionism.

The second printing in 1999 diverged significantly from the original subject of subjectivity, reaching bookshelves as a hardcover collection of angry correspondence, bitter accusations and recriminations between myself and editor Maury Salomon. An anomalous volume went to press in 1999 without the odd-numbered pages.

This new Third Edition bears the marks of several months of toil and, obviously, the marks of the printing press at Osprey Grove, Inc. Several passages have been reworked, including the discovery of a secret passage to the dining room. Clauses have been cleaned up, theses scrapped and conclusions extended . . . further. I have also capitalized “capital” wherever it appears, maintaining balance by decapitating “Capitol.” Latin phrases have been *italicized* and Italian phrases rubbed out. I have used **bold print** to indicate passages written while coffee was being spilled on my person.

Modifiers removed.

This edition, in addition, is unburdened of the French and German translations, what with the Euro and all. Due to the mysterious disappearance of my interpreter, the Spanish version has been lost in translation. Several unauthorized Russian translations have been shot, and sanctions are currently in force against rogue translations into Arabic, Farsi and Serbian.

Considerable press criticism focused on my controversial position in Chapter 10 on the inadequacy of language as an agent of human development and civil discourse. Too bad; it stays. All y'all can go fuck yourselves.

In light of the continued adherence to the rule of law in this country, no particular stress is laid on my calls for unaccountable mercenary death squads on page 297. However, I have declined to remove that part from this latest version, just in case.

Section I is now section i, Section II is now SEC² and Section III is now Life & Style. I never got around to revising Chapter 7 properly, so I have included a nonchalant whistle as a hint that nothing's wrong, nothing at all . . .

In order to lend this edition an air of scholarly gravity, I have widened all the margins and double-spaced the text. Appendix B was superfluous and has been cut out, the Glossary has been glossed over and the Table of Contents has devolved into a Disgruntled Cubicle.

The dedication of the Second Edition to my first wife Ann ("beloved in all my endeavors") has been annulled and several "eternally sincere thanks" redacted. All acknowledgments have been disavowed. This volume is dedicated to Pam, the crown jewel of my undying love, with heartfelt and grateful thanks to the Times New Roman font.

Thomas Hiram Thomas
Philadelphia, 2001

Third Place:

On the Lips of Children

by Joshua Kenney

Off Route 202, the main artery that runs through the town and out to points unknown, by the Dodge car dealership, a road leads into the partially developed hills. A ways down this road a circle, a cul-de-sac, sits on the right. A small red house is there, too small, really, for the family that lived there: a man and a woman and their two children. All of the most often used rooms, excepting the laundry room, were on the ground floor. The daughter lived in the middle bedroom, a converted walk-in closet, though the girl was still so small that the room seemed large. Palatial, even. The son, the younger of the two, had the room on the northern side of the house. The northern corner of the house, actually, commanding a view of the backyard, with its massive, ancient oak tree back by the rock and barbed wire fence, the small shed resting under the shade of a willow tree, the swing set not two years old but beginning to show signs of aging—rust from constant exposure to the harsh and temperamental New England weather.

He stood on top of his toy chest—the only real way his parents could get him to keep his room even somewhat clean, as it required no more effort than scooping up toys and dropping them into its yawning maw—staring out the window at that swing set. In winter his Father would clear the snow off the slide, piling the white fluff into a large mound at the foot. With His children in His lap and the metal of the slide groaning slightly from the sudden weight, they would plunge the three feet—a dizzying height to children that barely came up to the top of their Father's thighs—into the snow bank. Summers, a hose would be run out from the house and placed at the top of the slide with the children's plastic pool at the bottom. It did not take long for the pool to be filled with grass clippings, bugs, and twigs, nor for the ground around the pool to become a miasma of

rich brown mud. The children would delight in playing in that mud, laughing as the white dog joined them. He would cover himself in mud, except for his proud, broad head. It looked as if he had slipped on a coat.

When it became Time to Go In, his Father would place His thumb at the nozzle of the hose, becoming a human sprinkler for a while, until the children were dripping and the dog was white again.

Some years later the little boy would tell his Father to go fuck Himself in a long, emotionally charged letter. It was his first communication with his Father in almost a year.

The little boy climbed off the toy chest and sat in the middle of the room, surrounded by pieces of molded plastic designed to look like muscle-bound warriors. Long swords and studded shields in hand they would rush into battle, Herculean displays of strength and courage the norm. The heroic combatants fought valiantly, vigor to be the inspiration of songs and tales for generations to come, but they were slowly being overcome by the villains, whose treachery and duplicity was outdone only by their overwhelming numbers.

He stood then, walked out into the hall, passed the basement door, on to the dining room. At the table a young woman, Her head covered in tight curls, black as the space between the stars, the skin of Her rounded arms deepened from a porcelain white to a light tan, the color of polished pine. She stared intently at the array of cards before Her, a fantastic pattern of stacks and lines, peppered with hearts and diamonds, cat paws and darts. She turned Her head slightly at the approach of Her son, asked him what he was up to. He described the struggle taking place in his bedroom, universes away. Good was on the brink of annihilation at the hands of the forces of Evil, but he believed that with one final, concentrated effort, Good could still pull through. He asked Her if She would lend support to the Cause; he need not tell Her how Her presence at the battle would most surely bolster the morale of the troops.

She told him that She couldn't right now. After this game of solitaire She'd come and play with him.

He walked back to his room, his vision black. Mechanically he scooped the plastic into his arms, deposited them in the closet,

then shut the closet door. He stared at the wall sitting on the edge of the bed.

When She walked in moments later, She asked him here all the toys had gone. He was bored with playing with them. Her smile faded as a light flashed in Her eyes; quickly the smile was replaced. Did he want to play some other game with her? He told Her he didn't.

There was nothing She could do when he got like that, and She knew it. Pry, dig a little deeper and he would resist every inch of the way. As She turned back to the hall, She saw that he lay down on the bed, his back to Her. She squeezed her eyes tightly.

Yesterday She had worked since before they went to school until after they had gone to bed. Tonight She would be working until early in the morning. Looking at Her watch She saw She had only an hour and a half to feed them dinner and then get ready for work. Squeezing Her eyes tightly did not seem to work any more. She wiped Her cheek and moved into the kitchen.

It was hard on everybody.

It was only a year later, almost instantly in the grand scheme of things and the minds of children, when the boy began to vomit. Great streams of strawberry flavored milk poured from his body, more milk than it seemed he had drank. It was just after dinner.

Though the bathroom was barely five feet from the table, he couldn't make it there in time. He had felt a slight tickle in his throat, followed by the feeling of a great hole behind his tongue. Through that hole the bellows in his stomach pumped the strawberry milk, and not a small amount of chicken cordon bleu.

It would have gone all over the floor if She hadn't been there. Later in life She couldn't remember what caused Her to cup Her hands. What caused Her to catch the streams, run to the toilet, then back to Her son. It had seemed almost a reflex. Resolutely She ignored the smell of hot bile and strawberries, the warmth and stickiness that coated Her hands and arms halfway to the elbow. She took him to the bathroom, rinsed off his lips and rinsed out his mouth—remarkably he had gotten little on him—and washed her own hands. She stroked his hair and sat him at the table. Despite his protests

that he didn't want to throw up again, She presented him with a small cup of ginger ale, emblazoned with the likenesses of Good and Evil warriors. In warm tones She assured him he wouldn't throw this up.

For once bed time was not an issue. At Her suggestion he agreed that he should get some rest. The ginger ale finished, he was bundled into blue pajamas with red cuffs and a red S on the chest. The cape had been lost some time ago, or perhaps chewed into oblivion by the dog. His blanket was retrieved from the sofa, where he had left it when he went to the table for dinner, and placed into bed with him. Covers secured up to his chin She asked him if he was feeling better.

He was. He was feeling much better.

That night she slept outside of His bedroom at the door, listening to Him breathe.

This is the bottom.

Please turn right side up to protect the writing.